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**TEACHERS' VIEWS ON PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN  
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS**

***A PAPUA NEW GUINEA STUDY***

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Master of Special Education  
at the  
University of Waikato

*By*  
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*University of Waikato*

*2006*

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of having inclusive education is to value children with special needs so they can participate equally in all educational activities alongside their peers without special needs. There should not be any discrimination, segregation or isolation of these children with special needs from being educated rather they must be given an equal opportunity to participate alongside children without special needs.

This study seeks to investigate primary school teachers' views and experiences in implementing the Inclusive Education Policy in regular schools. The study was conducted in five districts of the Enga Province of Papua New Guinea. Six primary schools were selected and involved 77 teachers who responded to questionnaire items, while 12 teachers within the group were chosen to be involved in interviews. Data for the study were gathered and analysed from the questionnaires, and the interview transcripts.

The findings from the study revealed that most teachers supported the notion of Inclusive Education Policy and would like to implement it. However, they indicated that there needed to be a change in attitudes of teachers, peers, boards of management, and parents/caregivers to provide assistance for children with special needs. Most teachers felt that there needs to be more awareness of the principle and the importance of inclusion.

Teachers' limited knowledge of teaching children with special needs was also highlighted. In this study teachers admitted they needed more training in the field of educating children with special education in order to accommodate and teach children with special needs. This shows that teachers' colleges and universities need to have trained lecturers to develop more courses in special education. Teachers expressed concern that school inspectors do not know enough about the inclusive education concept and need to be trained as well so collaboratively they could implement the policy.

Government support is needed to effectively implement the inclusive education policy. This includes training of specialists to support teachers, funds for teaching and learning resources and facilities in schools.

The cultural implications and geographical issues have also had some impact on the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy, while the issue of children with HIV and AIDS was raised that teachers needed to be prepared in order to accommodate and teach those infected children.

All these issues highlighted are very important and it is hoped that the outcome of the findings will provide the Department of Education with new strategies to improve and strengthen their commitment to implement Inclusive Education Policy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank these following people who made it possible for me to complete this thesis.

First, to Dr. Roger Moltzen, my thesis supervisor and Dr. Vivien Hendy my thesis tutor for their continuous critical but quality comments, support and encouragement throughout my thesis. Vivien was a true mentor for me throughout this journey and I really thank her from my heart. I also would like to thank Dr. Deborah Fraser to have a final proofread in my thesis.

Second, to the New Zealand Government for awarding me a New Zealand Development Scholarships (NZDS). This has made it possible for me to come to New Zealand to pursue my postgraduate studies in special education. I would also like to thank Mrs. Sonya Saunders (Team Leader) and Mrs. Sue Malcolm, (Scholarship Coordinator) representing the NZDS here at the University of Waikato for financially supporting my family and me while being here in New Zealand. Without their support, this would have been almost impossible for me to achieve.

Third, to the Division of Teacher Education and Staff Development Unit for their continuous support in financial assistance, which made it possible for me to complete my studies here in New Zealand. I further extend my appreciation to the Advisor, Mr. Paul Sarr, of the Division of Education for his positive support that made it easy for me to carry out my research in Enga Province. My acknowledgement also goes to the primary school teachers who were willing to participate in this research. Their invaluable comments contributed greatly to this research.

Fourth, to my 'brother' John Rombo, for his wonderful support behind the scenes. His continuous encouragement, editing, critical comments and suggestions were so valuable. I also would like to thank Jimmy Pep for assisting with analysis of the quantitative data.

Fifth, to all the Christians for their continuous spiritual support. The good Lord is the source of wisdom, knowledge and understanding and I have always drawn near to Him in times of need.

Finally, to my beloved wife, Helen and children, Isaac, Lorrymah, Fregeth and '*bikhet meri*' Rithia for their patience, support and encouragement while being with me in New Zealand. A cup of coffee each night for dad showed how much they cared for me to complete this thesis.

***“It was a long journey of faith and struggle, and together we made it.”***

## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to the Lanekep tribe of Wabag District, and the people of Enga Province, Papua New Guinea.*



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### *1. Personal Experience*

In 1989, my second year of teaching I was posted to a remote primary school which is on the border between Western Highlands Province and the Gulf Province in Papua New Guinea. There was no road linking the school to the nearest district office or the main provincial centre. Air transport was the only means of going in and out of this place, or there was a walk of two days before reaching the nearest feeder road to the main provincial centre. There were only three of us posted to this school. I was given the grade four class to teach. To my surprise, the principal told me that there was a child with a hearing impairment in this class. Initially I had mixed feelings about whether to teach the child or send him home. Nevertheless, I kept him in the class but was worried and scared because I had no idea how to teach him with the other 31 children. I asked the principal, who had taught him for the last two years, for advice. He said he actually did nothing to help this child but kept him in the school. I tried to help him in his academic work for the first term. I did not know the sign language so had to use other children to help me get concepts across to this child. This did not go well because the child could not understand much of what was said in the classroom. The children who assisted me could not translate the English words into their own language for the child to understand the concept and it was so difficult for both the child and myself. I became totally confused and finally admitted to the principal that I could no longer continue to teach this child. We requested the parents to come and discussed the difficulties I had faced with the child. The principal told the parents to withdraw their child from the school.

In 1993, while teaching in a primary school a few kilometres away from the main provincial centre came another challenge for me. I had a grade three girl who used a wheelchair and who was paralysed from the neck down. She was brought to me by the community based rehabilitation officer. Together we helped each other and provided basic education for her. Nonetheless, this did not continue because the officer was transferred to another district. I tried my best to educate her, however could not manage the challenge so referred her to the nearest special education centre. I could

do little to assist, even though I knew that children with special needs had the right to education.

What hindered me in providing educational assistance was my lack of knowledge in these situations. This was the turning point for me to pursue my interest in the field of special education. I tried to get a teaching position at the nearest special education centre but was unsuccessful because I had no background knowledge in that specific area of education. I did not know the concept of inclusion and its importance in educating children with special needs. I decided that I should take up further studies so I could gain experience of teaching in a special education resource centre. I started taking studies seriously, obtaining my diploma and degree in education. However, the papers I took for this qualification, only covered general issues in education and did not meet my expectation. I believed that taking up further studies in the area of special education would help me obtain practical knowledge and skills to help children with special needs. This resulted in my application to do a master's degree in special education and I was accepted at the University of Waikato in 2004 and I was able to get the training in the field of special education that I so desired. Special education encompasses a great deal and what I have learned at the university will be taken back to Papua New Guinea and be put into practice by educating other teachers in the field who lack the knowledge and skills to educate children with special needs. I believe there are teachers out in the field who have negative perceptions and experiences in teaching children with special needs. They may not be willing to teach children with special needs because of the many factors involved in such an undertaking. However, once qualified, I believe together we will make a difference for these children so that they can have equal access to education with other children in my country.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Inclusive education refers to educating all children regardless of their abilities, gender or ethnicity. Every child has to be given equal as well as quality educational opportunities. It is a philosophical concept, where emphasis is placed on respecting the rights of children with special needs and the avoidance of discrimination. This means that schools should accommodate the needs of all children and encourage mutually enriching relationships between teachers, children and parents.

Inclusive education, since gaining recognition in 1994 by the United Nations, has been incorporated into the education systems of many countries. The importance of providing equal and quality education to children with disabilities has become the main focus many parts of the world. Papua New Guinea is a member of the United Nations and has adopted the policy into the National Department of Education yet, the implementation of the inclusive education policy in the primary schools has proven to be difficult and is either ignored or moving at a slow pace. Teachers are the implementers of the inclusive education programme in their respective schools. The principle of inclusion means that children with special needs should be accommodated in the same academic learning environment as children without special needs. However, from the researcher's experience it would seem that many primary school teachers in the field are not aware of the policy of inclusive education. The concept of inclusive education is new to many practising, especially those teachers who have been teaching for more than 15 years. They possibly believe that children with special needs have no place in the regular classroom. Teachers who have graduated with a diploma in teaching since 1994 have gained some training in inclusive education but nonetheless it is doubtful whether many are implementing the programme in schools. They possibly fear that their training has been inadequate regarding many different aspects of inclusive/special education and therefore these teachers do not have the knowledge and experience to implement a programme(s) in this area.

Studies emphasise that teachers often worry that they are not competent to teach children with special needs in their classrooms (e.g., Bailey & du Plessis; Center & Ward 1987 cited in Foreman, 2005; Connelly, 2004; Mushoriwa, 2001; Williams & Gersch, 2004). Studies also report that teachers often do not work collaboratively with the parents to address the children's academic and social needs. It appears teachers feel that they do not have time to assist children with special needs. A study carried out by Connelly (2004) in New Zealand found that the increased workload on teachers resulted in very little support for inclusive programmes.

In Papua New Guinea, there seems to be little awareness of the importance of this policy within the National Department of Education so this is not passed on to the

teachers, children, parents, other related organisation. Therefore, this research is to investigate the factors that contribute to either promoting or hindering the programme being implemented.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate Papua New Guinea primary school teachers' views and experiences in implementing the inclusive education policy at the schools in the Enga province. It is hope that the outcome of the findings will provide the Department of Education with new strategies to improve or strengthen their commitment to the Inclusive Education Policy.

### **4. Research Questions**

There are four research questions formulated to guide the study.

- i. What are the views of primary school teachers on the implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in regular schools?
- ii. What are some of the challenges that teachers face when implementing the inclusive education policy in regular classrooms?
- iii. What are some of the supports being provided by the Government to assist in the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy?
- iv. What are some factors that impact on the effective implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy?

### **5. Significance of the Study**

This research is significant for the National Department of Education. First, this study will investigate whether primary school teachers have understood the concept of inclusive education and are implementing it. It will target teachers with either a certificate or a diploma in teaching in primary schools. It is anticipated that the findings the content to which teachers know and practice the concept of inclusive education in schools. Eventually, the findings from the research should support teachers who have graduated with diplomas at the teachers colleges and also those in the in-service college who have taken special education courses as a core subject, to provide professional development at their school for teachers with certificates and also the elementary teachers. Together these teachers can carry awareness into the



community regarding the importance of inclusive education and encourage parents to send their children with special needs to their local school. From this, it would be hoped that the Boards of Management of schools will then develop policies to accommodate children with special needs in the schools.

Second, the findings will help the Department of Education to identify the areas in special education which have not received enough attention by the policy makers and the policy implementers. These include areas like the policy development, teacher training and funding for effective implementation of the inclusive education programme in primary schools.

This study is the first of its kind in Papua New Guinea, even though the United Nation introduced the Inclusive Education Policy back in 1994. No research has yet been carried out in Papua New Guinea to check the progress of the inclusive education programme at primary school level. Comparative studies in special education in 1994 only showed how Papua New Guinea had progressed to meet the needs of people with disabilities (Vlaardingerbroek, Tottenham, & Leach, 1994). The study emphasises how the non government organisations provided support for people with disabilities and mentioned that special education resource centres had been established to cater for children with special needs. Other similar studies in different countries that looked at the progress of inclusive education in schools have focused on progress of implementation this. For example, in New Zealand Connelly (2004) carried out research on principals' and teachers' attitudes towards implementing inclusive education. In Australia, Bailey & Plessis (1998) carried out a similar study on principals' attitudes towards inclusion.

Although this present study includes data from five districts from only one province in the country, the results should reflect the progress of inclusive education in the other provinces.

## **6. The Research Setting**

The research was conducted at Enga, one of the 20 provinces in Papua New Guinea. The province is located in the highlands region and is situated in the highest and the most rugged part of the country. The altitude is about 2000 metres above sea level and is located up along the trunk of the Owen Stanley Range. The landmass of the province is small, 12,800 square kilometres and has a population of 289,299 from the 2000 census (Department of Education, 2002; Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, 2005). There are five districts in this province and the provincial capital is Wabag, situated at the centre of the province. Enga is unique among other provinces in the country because it has only one major language and ethnic group throughout the province.

There are about 1,146 teachers teaching in the province, distributed over four levels of education. The primary level has 682 teachers, which is the highest number followed closely by the elementary level of 240 teachers. The secondary level has 173 teachers and the Technical/Vocational level has only 51 teachers (Department of Education, 2004).

The study involves 80 primary school teachers in six schools within the five districts of Enga Province. These districts include Wapenamanda, Wabag, Kompam Ambum, Porgera Laiagam and Kandep.

Enga Province was chosen for this study because first, the Provincial Administration with the full support of the Provincial Government gives priority to education. The Provincial Government's initiative is to focus on and finance building the human resources of the province. Second, special education has not been a high priority for the last two decades in this province. There was no Special Education Resource Centre in the province and most children with disabilities did not have any opportunities to be educated. However, last year, the importance of developing the human resources also focused on educating people with disabilities and the provincial administration has created the position of a Special Education Coordinator to develop plans to accommodate special education programmes. Third, the Provincial Education Personnel are familiar to the researcher and provided assistance to facilitate this study. Therefore, this research has the potential to make a positive contribution to special education practices in the province.

## **7. Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher outlines his experience and inadequacy in catering for children with special needs in his own classroom. This inadequacy has motivated him to pursue further studies in special education in order to gain sufficient knowledge to provide academic support for children with special needs and this was the purpose for this research thesis.

The research has been undertaken in one province in Papua New Guinea and has focused on the impediments to practicing effective Inclusive Education Policy. The research anticipates that findings from this unique study in Papua New Guinea will assist the policy makers to provide strategies to enable effective practice across the whole country.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

This chapter examines the relevant literature on inclusive education. It discusses first, what disability means and the perceptions people have about those with disabilities. It explores the history and progress of inclusive education and the development of policies to recognise the importance of inclusive education internationally. Second, the effects of inclusion, academically and socially, are discussed. Third, there is some discussion of the elements of an effective inclusive education programme in primary schools. Finally, the education system in Papua New Guinea is detailed, followed by the history and progress of special education there. Although, this study has been under taken in Papua New Guinea, the New Zealand situation is familiar to the researcher and is often used to illustrate particular points in his study.

### Section 1

Section one reviews the definition of disability, which are needed to understand the historical and philosophical journey disability has taken towards the notion of inclusion. The transition to this policy was brought about by many social and political developments leading to the goal of people with disabilities being recognized as equal. The section will not only define the term disability but examine the way society views and perceives people with disabilities. The review will discuss the history of approaches in educating children with special needs.

## 1. Disability

The term disability is often used to refer to one or some of the body parts, which do not function freely resulting in an impairment (Ashman & Elkins, 1998). Disability is generally perceived as a condition, which results in a person being incapable of performing certain duties physically. Although there are many different definitions for disability, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined disability as: “any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for human beings” (WHO, 1990 cited in Neilson, 2005. p. 11). It could be physical, sensory or intellectual.

The word disability usually raises many conflicting issues within a social group because it does marginalise people with some form of impairment from the other people. People with disabilities are often classified and labelled as incapable of contributing to society's social and economic development (Fulcher, 1989). The labelling of people with disability has been one of the hottest debated issues because it focuses on the negative features of the disability. This has led to the development of the discourse theory whereby the concept of disability can be categorised into different domains.

## **2. Discourses of Disabilities**

A focus on discourses of disability demonstrates the main ways in which society views people with disabilities (Fulcher, 1989; Hendy, 1995; Neilson, 2005). People with disabilities are a minority group and generally considered inferior so society frequently overrules them in decision-making about their lives. Many develop the attitude that these people need to be cared for, as they cannot support themselves. This kind of thought was the foundation of the development of the four discourses by Fulcher (1989). She categorised people with disability into four main discourses according to how society based their knowledge and understanding on the type and situation of the disability. These discourses include medical, charity, lay and rights. The first three discourses classify disability as a perceived 'need' while the fourth one, the 'rights discourse', provides opportunity for people with disabilities to have a choice in decision-making and to participate meaningfully in society (Neilson, 2004).

### **2.1 Medical Discourse**

The medical discourse refers to disabilities that focus more on medical attention. It is the dominant discourse when people with disabilities are referred for medical attention to 'cure' or 'treat' the disability (Fulcher, 1989; Neilson, 2005). From this perspective such people are considered handicapped and unable to contribute fully to the well-being of the society.

### **2.2 Charity Discourse**

The charity discourse is closely related to medical discourse. From this view people with disabilities are kept in one place so that care and medical attention is provided (Fulcher, 1989; Hendy, 1995; Neilson, 2005). In this discourse those labelled disabled are classified as “dependent, helpless, and needy” (Neilson, 2005, p.15) and required some form of care and support from society. This discourse emphasises “public concern and empathy” towards people with disabilities (Hendy, 1995, p.11). Different organisations are formed and institutions are established with the expectation that they will take the full responsibility to care for those with disabilities and at the same time raise funds to meet the operational cost of the care (Neilson, 2005). Some of these organisations include the International Red Cross Society, the Cheshire Home and Mount Zion Blind Centre in Papua New Guinea.

### 2.3 Lay Discourse

The lay discourse is based on and influenced by the other two earlier discourses. This discourse labels and classifies people with disabilities as “inferior, dependent and [therefore] marginalises them” (Neilson, 2005, p.16). Often people with disabilities are categorised by their disabilities rather than their person (Fulcher, 1989; Neilson, 2005). As a result, they are frequently being left out of society so they are prevented from participating fully in an economic or social way.

### 2.4 Rights Discourse

The rights discourse is totally opposite to the other three discourses. As Hendy (1995) states, this discourse is clearly a political issue. This discourse demands the right for people with disabilities to be considered as equal as other people so that they can participate meaningfully in the social and economic aspects within society (Fulcher, 1989; Neilson, 2005). It fights against “discrimination, exclusion and oppression” (Hendy, 1995, p.11) for equal opportunities to education, employment and social activities. People with disabilities do not want to be discriminated against, but to be independent, self-reliant and participate equally along with those who do not have disabilities.

## 3. The Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a complex notion and is closely associated with people's understanding of with disabilities generally, and this right to access educational opportunities like other people (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). Advocates of inclusion have included the parents of children with disabilities, teachers of children with disabilities, civil rights advocates and those involved at a political level (Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Pijl, Meyer & Hagarty, 1997; Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2005; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). The idea of inclusion was developed and adapted as the best solution to combat discrimination so that people with disabilities would not be segregated. Inclusion is based on a social model, which recognises the value of people with disabilities and the positive contributions they make to society (Armstrong, 2003; Florin, Rose, & Tilstone, 1998). Inclusion means that people with disabilities are given equal opportunities to participate meaningfully in all activities, whether, educational, or social in their everyday lives (Florine et al., 1998; Inclusion International, 1998). On the other end there should be a change in the attitudes of people to accept people with disabilities as equal participants and contributors to nation building (Florin, et al., 1998; Pijl, et al., 1997).

### **3.1 History of Inclusive Education**

The movement towards inclusive education for children with special needs started off in the 1960s (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Foreman, 2005; Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Many parents of children with disabilities, special education teachers and specialists believed that segregating children with special needs into separate learning places had limited their intellectual ability to achieve academically and develop positive social relationships (Foreman, 2005; Smith et al., 2005). Research has suggested that many children with disabilities have not received appropriate education in special resource schools or units (Inclusion International, 1998; Smith et al., 2005). In addition, these settings can result in lack of social interactions between the children with disabilities and the non-disabled children. The consequence of this segregation may later develop into isolation in adulthood (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Peterson & Hittie, 2003).

It is also believed that about 80% of children with special needs in developing countries have little or no educational opportunity at all (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Inclusion International, 1998). They are kept back at home because of the cultural

perceptions of people with disabilities or the lack of understanding of the importance of providing these children opportunities to enter schools.

### **3.2 Integration**

In the late 1970s, the concept of integration was developed to cater for the interests of children with special needs (Andrews & Lupart 1993; Smith et al., 2005). This was again as a result of pressure from the civil rights movement, parents, advocates, the teachers and professionals in the field of special education, and some politicians (Andrews & Lupart 1993; Smith et al., 2005). The integrating of children with special needs into regular schools was to break the barrier of children with disabilities being segregated, which gave them more freedom and equal opportunity to interact with other children without disabilities (Foreman, 2005; Inclusion International, 1998; Smith et al., 2005; Westwood, 2003). With integration, children who had disabilities were able to attend regular schools but were usually taught in a separate special unit or class. They might participate in certain lessons with other children without disabilities each day so that everyone could learn and interact socially together (Foreman, 2005; Westwood, 2003). This was to build academic and social confidence within every child. The integration approach was seen as the best choice for children with special needs to learn positively. Additionally, parents and the school systems considered that mainstreaming should be the most appropriate place for all children regardless of their abilities (Foreman, 2005).

However, the integration approach attracted some criticisms. First, there was a concern that regular schoolteachers often lacked the confidence and preparation to teach children with disabilities in their classes. Often they considered that teaching children with special needs was not their responsibility and only for special education teachers (Inclusion International, 1998; Stangvik, 1997). Second, regular class teachers also felt that there was extra workload and stress associated with having children with special needs in their classrooms (Stangvik, 1997; Westwood, 2003). Third, teachers felt they lacked the knowledge and experience in teaching children with special needs (Westwood, 2003). In addition, the school administration sometimes tried to use this opportunity to request more funds for those with special needs in regular classes but used the money for other school purposes (Stangvik, 1997, 2004; Westwood, 2003). Research has also revealed that regular class teachers



preferred to teach children with mild special needs and reject or ignore others who had profound or multiple disabilities (Stangvik, 1997). Therefore, the integration approach did not meet all the needs of the children with disabilities and a new approach was needed, so this is where the inclusive approach was introduced.

### **3.3 Inclusion**

The concept of inclusive education started in the mid 1980s, and differed significantly from the integration method. The main emphasis now was that children with disabilities should be included in all school programmes and activities, unlike the integration approach which involved limited inclusion (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Smith et al, 2005). Separate classroom and units were seen as inappropriate. The classroom should be a place where all children, despite their disabilities, had the right to belong and to talk, work and share together (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Smith et al., 2005). This concept was again the result of pressure from parents, advocates, special education teachers, general teachers and policy makers (Smith et al., 2005). The fundamental arguments for the move towards inclusive education were not only based on educational issues but also on the social and moral factors relating to children with special needs (Inclusion International, 1998). The outcome of earlier policies was that separate special education systems led to social segregation and isolation of people with disabilities in adult life (Ainscow, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998). The purpose of having inclusive education is to value everyone as equal so that they participate more fully in society in adult life (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). Inclusion allows children with disabilities to enter regular schools with the non-disabled children and participate in all educational activities where appropriate and seek employment and be involved in wider decision-making about their lives. In 1994, the policy of inclusive education was endorsed and proclaimed as a policy by UNESCO and was recognised by many countries, for example, countries like New Zealand, Australia, and Papua New Guinea.

### **3.4 The Salamanca Framework**

In 1994, 92 government and 25 international organisation representatives gathered together in Salamanca, Spain for the World Conference on Special Education Needs and Access and Quality conference (Ainscow, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). These representatives of the government organisations

unanimously agreed to call for the inclusive education policy to be recognised by all the nations belonging to the United Nations (Ainscow, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). This approach is in agreement with the endorsement by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Inclusion International, 1998; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004).

The Salamanca Statement proclaims that:

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricular, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resources use and partnerships with communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.

(Salamanca Framework for Action, Article 7 – Inclusion International, 1998, p. 2)

Therefore, according to this framework schools ought to accommodate all children regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional disabilities (Inclusion International, 1998). Children should be given the right to be educated at the acceptable level of learning with other non-disabled children. There must be constant support from the teachers for inclusive practice (Ainscow, 1999; Mitchell, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998). Teachers should not look at the disability of the child as the focus of education, but the child as a person and how he or she can achieve academically (Inclusion International, 1998).

The Salamanca Framework strongly emphasised that the establishment of inclusive schools actually helps to combat discrimination and negative attitudes, develops children's confidence socially and builds an inclusive society for them to live in. It gives them the right to be recognised as a person who can contribute meaningfully to nation building along with the rest of the population. Therefore, every country should take into consideration the importance of this policy so they can implement it

effectively for the benefit of all its citizens (Ainscow, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998; Mitchell, 1999).

### **3.5 Inclusive Legislations and Policies**

The constant change of policies to produce equal opportunities for people with disabilities to have the same rights as all people, has gone through many different phases in almost all the nations in the world. Most of the policies for special education reflect each country's constitution or the civil rights movement or a treaty, and are based on providing equal opportunity for everyone. Policies are constantly changing so that they meet the needs of everyone both within countries and through out the international community.

There are many other important international legislation and policy documents written to recognise the rights of people with disabilities and to support the Salamanca Framework on the inclusive education policy. The important policies include: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which was anti-discrimination and advocated for equal opportunities for children with disabilities; the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990 which stated that there should be equal access to education for every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the educational system; the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, which emphasised equal educational opportunities for children and adults with disabilities (Inclusion International, 1998). These international policy statements are being adopted and reflected in the legislation and policy of many countries in the world. However, each country has developed its own policy in order to suit the needs of children with special educational needs so inclusive education can effectively be practised in their schools.

## **4. Special Education Policy in New Zealand**

In New Zealand, the government has fully committed to provide adequate special educational programmes for children with special needs. The aim is to provide an education for all children regardless of the disabilities or differences so that learning can take place in regular schools without any discrimination or segregation (Mentis, Quinn, & Ryba, 2005; Ministry of Education, 1999). The Ministry of Education has

developed many policies to provide effective inclusive for all children in regular schools. The recent policy document known as ‘Special Education 2000’ was developed by the Ministry of Education to achieve a world-class inclusive education system and to support the Education Act, 1989 and 2000 (Ministry of Education, 1999; Mitchell, 1999).

These legislative and policy acts were further assisted by some important legal documents of the country, Aotearoa New Zealand. According to O’Brien and Ryba (2005), some of the following major legislation that supported the Special Education 2000 policy included: the Education Act, 1989; the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, Human Rights Act; the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1989 and; the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840. These acts were further adapted into different regulatory requirements to enhance effective inclusive practice in the country. These included: the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2001; the Special Education Policy Guidelines 1995; the National Education Guidelines 1993; the National Administrative Guidelines and; the New Zealand Curriculum Framework 1993 (Mentis et al., 2005; Mitchell, 1999). These policies were seen as the basis from which children with special educational needs would gain equal access to formal education in schools as well other educational institutions. In order to implement and achieve inclusive education, the Ministry of Education, through the Special Education 2000 project has provided funding to assist children with different levels of disabilities. These funding mechanisms included: the Special Education Grants (SEG); Ongoing And Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS); Supplementary Learning Support (SLS); Severe Behavioural Initiative; Speech-language Initiative and; the School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF). In practice, different groups were created to work alongside children with different levels of disabilities. These included the Resource Teachers Learning Behaviours group (RTLBs); Resource Teachers Literacy (RT:Lit) and; the Early Intervention Support including Education Support Workers (ESW) (O’Brien & Ryba, 2005).

## **5. School Policy**

Schools are where the actual implementation of the policy guidelines takes place, so these guidelines should look into different components of providing effective special

education programmes to meet the needs of all students individually (Mentis et al., 2005; Mitchell, 1999). The main focus of any guidelines should be the actual students with special needs, how they can be included in schools without any impediment, and have full access to all educational activities. Teachers should welcome these students into their classroom alongside other students. There should not be any discrimination against them among the teachers or among other students, but both teachers and students should develop a respectful attitude towards children with special needs. The curriculum should be modified and delivered to meet the needs of all the children in the class (Mitchell, 1999). Parents' partnership should be encouraged and maintained to provide effective educational programmes at home and school for students with special needs. The physical environment should provide free access for students with special needs and adaptations as required. Teachers and specialists need to work as a team to provide effective teaching strategies for these students. The school should organise any physical adaptation, assistive technology, timetable and other related practical matters, which should meet the needs of all students (Mentis et al., 2005).

## ***Section 2***

This section reflects on the literature regarding the benefits and experiences of inclusion for children with special needs while learning alongside non-disabled children. The literature reveals the effects of academic and social benefits on children both with disabilities and without disabilities in regular schools. The literature also examines the views and experiences of teachers when teaching children with special needs alongside non-disabled children in regular classrooms. Furthermore, research points out the types of collaborative support teachers can obtain from parents, teacher aides and the specialists to maximise the benefits of an inclusive environment.

### **1. Academic Value for Children with Special Needs**

In terms of academic benefit, children with special needs should have equal opportunities to work alongside their peers. The activities, which are provided by the class teachers, should be performed by all children according to their intellectual abilities (Gerschel, 1998).

Several studies have pointed out that children with special needs benefit academically from being part of a regular classroom. These children were often able to compete academically with their non-disabled peers. Some children were able to learn from each other while others were able to perform well on their own so that their academic performance was acknowledged. An example of such academic success was reported by MacCabe (2005), the Co-ordinator of Epic Arts, a UK-based trust that runs programmes in performance arts for children with special needs in Cambodia. MacCabe commented that a girl with a physical disability had performed so well in the performance art that she was selected to participate in an international arts programme. Another report by the UNESCO (1997) cited a case of a small girl with visual impairment from Long Lin, a city in western China, who was integrated into a regular classroom, was able to excel in her academic work with other children. For instance, she could do her addition calculations with her bamboo sticks much quicker than other children in the class. Similar research by Carlisle & Chang (1996) indicated that children with learning difficulties did very well in many of the practical experiments during science lessons. In Rowe's study (1999), he was impressed by how children with autism had quickly adapted to social stories told by their teachers. The stories were short, simple and were related to some of the class routine such as the 'lunch time activity' in which children were able to differentiate the flow of the story.

Some students with special needs are able to maintain improvement in some subjects, although not always all subjects. When these students have difficulty trying to understand a concept, learning can often improve when teachers and peers spend time with them and provide assistance. For example, a study by Waldron and McLeskey (1998, as cited in Salend & Garrick-Duhaney, 1999) stated that students with learning difficulties in a regular classroom setting showed great improvement in their reading performance with this type of support.

In contrast, there is evidence that not all the students with special needs have achieved academically in regular classrooms. There could be many reasons associated with this. However research focusing on the academic achievement of students with special needs has revealed that there are some challenges that these students encountered while learning in the regular classrooms. A study in Singapore on

students with visual impairment enrolled into mainstream schools revealed that they had difficulty coping with the academic work given to them and at the same time were pressured with a higher workload. The level of work was above their level of expectation to perform, hence they did not cope with it (West, Houghton, Taylor & Ling, 2004). The reasons related to this lack of academic achievement could mean that teachers did not spend enough time assisting students with special needs or that the topics for each subject offered were not modified to suit the needs of these students with special needs.

Research shows that there is limited academic value for students with special needs in the regular classroom unless the instructions are modified to meet the student's need and without this modification there is no guarantee that students with special needs are meaningfully participating in the academic learning (Artiles, 2003, cited in Connelly, 2004).

Research has indicated that non-disabled children have also benefited from inclusion. A study in an Australian primary school, to find out if non-disabled children would accept children with special needs in their classroom, showed that 63% of the children accepted them and stated that their peers with special needs would learn equally well alongside them. Additionally, they felt that they also benefited academically from having their peers with special needs in their classes (Wright, 1998). A similar study in New Zealand by Rangi (2001) on Maori students with learning and behaviour difficulties in the Waikato region indicated that non-disabled children were able to learn more from the contribution of children with learning difficulties when working on activities in small groups. They were able to share openly of what they thought about the group exercises given.

Non-disabled children could also benefit from the additional educational resources provided to assist children with special needs. For instance all the children in the class would use learning resources such as computers, library books and other educational resources. They can also learn to respect each other and develop cooperative strategies to solving problems together (MacArthur, Kelly & Higgins, 2005).

When comparing academic benefits of children in regular schools and in special education centres, studies have indicated that children with special needs learn more educational content in regular settings than in special education centres. A study in Northern Ireland by Educable (2000, cited in MacArthur, 2005) stated that children with disabilities learned more while being included into the regular settings. They were able to learn many different new things in subjects taught when teachers encouraged to them to take their studies seriously and compete against non-disabled children. In special education centres, teachers were found focusing their teaching strategies on the academic needs of children with special needs so there was a limited academic challenge.

## **2. Social Value for Children with Special Needs**

Another major importance of inclusion is for all children to socialise together regardless of their abilities. This is to promote anti-discriminatory attitudes among all children. The concept of inclusion is to develop social competencies among children with special needs and their non-disabled peers within the school environment (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). In the classroom the children are able to chat, share ideas together and to assist each other in all schoolwork while outdoors they can interact together and have the opportunity to invite others to join in their play (Conway, 2005). This is supported by a report from UNESCO (1997) on a pilot project to practise inclusion in schools in Burkina Faso, which revealed that children with disabilities, who were integrated into regular classrooms, developed positive social interactions with their non-disabled peers. The cultural barriers could no longer separate them. Another study by UNESCO (1997) in Ivory Coast produced similar results as children with hearing impairment were accepted by their classmates when integrated into schools. There was no resistance and children were motivated to practice sign language with the children with hearing impairments in the class. Therefore, teachers should take every opportunity to encourage social interaction between children with special needs and their non-disabled peers. Children and teachers should also interact socially together to ensure the children with disabilities are no longer socially isolated (Conway, 2005; O'Brien & Ryba, 2005).



Studies have also indicated that children without disabilities can become too generous and help children with disabilities too much in activities such as pushing their wheelchairs, becoming a guide or teaching them how to play (Kishi & Meyer, 1994 cited in Meyer & Bevan-Brown, 2005). However, some children develop their social relationships to the extent that these relationships last for years. This often brings families together so they spend time together and invite each other for outdoor activities such as camping, birthday parties, watching movies or spending weekends as a group (Meyer & Bevan-Brown (2005).

In contrast, social interactions sometimes have a negative impact on children with special needs, which results in having lower social status at school. Children without disabilities could develop an attitude that children with disabilities need support and help while at school and therefore they would provide assistance for them. The result is there is no freedom for the children to interact socially, as their peers would consider them as inferior and in need of assistance at all times (Farmer, Pearl & Van Acker, 1996; Meyer & Bevan-Brown, 2005). Some research has found that most students with special needs were generally not accepted by their peers or classmates who were non-disabled (Farmer, et al., 1996). Many children with special needs have considerable trouble in their relationships with their classmates. When children with special needs have poor social skills, interactions with their peers may not be accepted easily and as a result they can have difficulty developing and maintaining friendships (Farmer et al., 1996). They are less popular with their friends, at times being rejected or ignored by their peers and teachers, so they have a lower status within the school. For instance, a study by Rangī (2001) on Maori children with behaviour and learning difficulties found they developed low self-esteem in school because their classmates could not accept their behaviour.

Social interaction varies according to the type of disability children have. Research indicates that many students with learning and behavioural difficulties often have poorer and /or more inefficient social skills than those with physical disabilities. They do not interact well with their peers and other children with special needs (Conway, 2005; Farmer, et al., 1996). Similar research has reported that children with emotional and behavioural issues have very poor social relationships with their non-disabled peers. They are often aggressive, disruptive and often start fights with non-disabled

children and therefore their peers do not like to interact socially with them (Farmer, et al., 1996). A study in Singapore also indicated that children with visual impairment have difficulty developing deep friendships with their peers and therefore could not share their problems with others (West et al., 2004).

However when comparing overall the interaction with children in the regular schools and in the special education centres, studies have reported that children with special needs developed good social relationships with their non-disabled peers in the regular settings, and more than in special education centres. Study by Fryxell and Kennedy's 1995, (cited in Connelly, 2004) discovered that students with severe disabilities who were integrated into regular classrooms formed more and closer contacts with both their disabled and non-disabled children than those children of the same disabilities educated in the self-contained unit. Salend et al, (1999, cited in Connelly 2004) confirmed the finding. The study highlighted that children with learning difficulties interacted well with their classmates in games, as compared to children with hearing impairments in the special education schools. Children without disabilities also felt that inclusion was the best option for children with different abilities to be educated together. A study by Salend et al, (1999 cited in Connelly, 2004), carried out in a middle school in the United States, stated that the majority of children felt that inclusion was a good idea and would help them develop interpersonal skills with children with disabilities.

### **3. Inclusive Education Programme in Regular Classrooms**

The fundamental principle behind providing an inclusive school is that all children should learn together regardless of difficulties or differences. However, in order to have an effective inclusive programme, everyone has to contribute to the implementation of the programme. Teachers play the foremost role in educating all these children but other relevant personnel such as parents, support specialists, and Boards of Trustees, who collaboratively work with the teachers to provide more educational support to address the children's needs, are critical to its success. The next section will look at some of the contributing factors and vital service providers, which promote the implementation of an inclusive programme.

### **3.1 Role of the Teacher**

Teachers play a major role in planning and implementing teaching and learning strategies to all students in the regular classroom, regardless of their status. They play an important role in the success of inclusion in the classroom. It is the teachers who make sure students with special needs have the same rights to a quality education as students without special needs (Mitchell, 1999; Spedding, 2005). If teachers have positive attitudes in providing the best education for all the children then inclusion will be more likely to succeed. That means, valuing and interacting with children with diverse learning needs (Gillies, 2002; Whyte, 2005).

Providing appropriate teaching and learning strategies is an important role for teachers. Mentis et al., (2005), emphasised that in order to meet the academic needs of children teachers have to provide appropriate learning instructions and strategies for them. Curriculum has to be modified and designed in order to meet the needs of students with special needs (Mentis et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2005). Teaching resources should be adequately provided to support learning, and lessons must be children-centred and accommodate the needs of every student. It is important for class teachers to develop effective teaching outcomes and good lesson structures, which would motivate children to become actively involved with challenges appropriate to them (Mentis et al., 2005). However, some researchers have expressed concern that teachers may not provide effective support to challenge children with special needs academically, such as with remedial work. These researchers contend that teaching approaches are often not modified to meet the needs of children with special needs (MacArthur, et al., 2005). Teachers should organise the classrooms in order to have access so children with special needs can move around without too much difficulty (Smith et al 2004). Therefore, the role of teacher makes a difference in the learning of all the children in the classroom.

Appropriate assessments should be provided to focus the learning process and achievements of the children (Mentis et al., 2005). Cooperative learning strategies may be used to support and promote children's diverse learning needs as this helps to develop their academic and social competencies (Smith et al., 2004; Thorburn, 1997).

Fraser (2005) & Smith et al., (2004) stated that teachers should develop a good working relationship with parents and caregivers of students with special educational needs (*see later section on teacher parent partnership*). This would help the teachers understand how they could meet the academic needs of children in the classroom.

### **3.2 Attitudes of Teachers**

Attitude is to a large extent a reflection of a person's fundamental beliefs. It influences the way a person thinks and behaves. To understand and appreciate a person's attitudes, we often need to understand his or her beliefs. Many social problems and much discrimination occur because of the attitudes of people. According to Soder (1997, p. 25) attitudes are often assumed as "being negative and prejudiced." The journey and progress of special education, to a large extent, is all about attitudes and attitudinal changes. Many authors, researchers and practitioners say that attitude has a huge impact on the progress of inclusive education policy for children with special needs (Frost, 2002). This means the attitudes of the teachers, but also peers, principals and parents are very important because they determine the progress of an inclusive education programme (Frost, 2002).

Teachers' attitudes play a significant role on whether inclusive education can be fully be implemented in the regular school or not. Teachers who have positive attitudes about inclusive education accept children with special needs into their classrooms and involve them in all academic learning and social interaction with other children (Frost, 2002).

In order to fully understand the attitudes of the teachers towards the implementation of an inclusion policy, a considerable amount of research has been carried out to investigate this phenomenon. In one study, general classroom teachers described their inclusive education programme as "transforming experiences" for them (Hunt and Goetz, 1997 pp.77). It was a complete change in their views and understanding to teach children with special educational needs, while at the same time they have expressed the reality of implementing the inclusive programme. They had learned and gained a lot of confidence in their teaching and developed positive relationships with the students. The school administration and support staff supported them in making

inclusion work for everyone at the school. Another study by LeRoy and Simpson (1996), in the state of Michigan, USA, indicated that teachers were in support of the inclusive programme and provided effective teaching and learning strategies for children with special needs. They developed positive attitudes by getting to know the children with special needs and thereby provided an appropriate education for them.

In contrast, there are teachers who have developed negative attitudes towards implementing an inclusive policy. It is clear that these teachers do not like to teach children with special needs in their classrooms or are unwilling to take on the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers. This was demonstrated in a study in Queensland by Whiting & Young (1996) which revealed that general teachers were not in favour of inclusion and did not want to include children with special needs into their classrooms because of the difficulties and the stress they felt in attempting to educate these children.

Other general classroom teachers, who supported the inclusion programme however, were selective in the type and degree of disability that they felt they could accommodate. According to Bailey and Plessis' (1998) research, most general classroom teachers felt comfortable teaching students with mild or moderate learning, sensory and physical disabilities. However, they would not include students with severe disabilities and students with emotional and behavioural difficulties as they felt these students were not easy to teach or interact with.

Some teachers stated that teaching a student with an identifiable disability could be less of a problem than one unidentifiable problem, while others prefer to teach children with mild disabilities (Foreman, 2005). A study in New Jersey revealed that general classroom teachers preferred to teach children with less obvious disabilities. For instance, teachers were in favour of teaching students with learning disabilities rather than students with severe disabilities or intellectual disabilities. They felt more comfortable assisting students with learning disabilities in their academic performance than those with severe disabilities (Villa, et al. 1996 cited in Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998). A similar study by Cook (2001) in the United States indicated that teachers have an attitude where they would prefer to select which students with special needs to work with in the classrooms. In the findings, Cook

stated that teachers do not want to work with students with hidden disabilities and those with behavioural problems but are willing to teach those students with obvious disabilities. This negative attitude was seen in further research where general classroom teachers in New York reported their responses to inclusion as “hostile and anxious” (Soodak, et al., 1998, p. 492). These teachers were more aggressive when having children with intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties and emotional and behaviour disorders than those with hearing impairment or physical handicaps. The findings were in line with other research that found that teachers hold more positive attitudes towards including children with social and physical disabilities, compared to those with academic or behavioural disorders (Wilczenski, 1992 cited in Soodak et al., 1998). Therefore, it appears that certain children with disabilities are considered easier to include in classroom programmes than others.

Many teachers seem to have the attitude that teacher aides are responsible for providing academic support for children with special needs and therefore they do not need to spend much time assisting these children. A study in New Zealand indicated that most general classroom teachers depend too much on their teacher aides to provide academic work for children with special needs. However, these teacher aides do not have formal training and competences to provide academic work for children with special needs in the classrooms (MacArthur, et al., 2005).

### **3.3 Stress & Teaching**

Stress is the impact of working under extreme pressure. According to Cosgrove (2000) stress is an emotional condition that builds in a person from having increasing or ongoing pressure from related factors. Stress for teachers is very common because most of the time they are constantly under considerable pressure to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all their children. As Cosgrove (2000) states, teachers go through many stressful experiences such as anger, frustration, anxiety and depression. There are many factors that contribute to teachers’ stressful experiences. First, evidence has revealed that many teachers suffer from stress because of their perceived inadequacy and incompetence to teach children (Cockburn, 1996 cited in Tronman & Woods, 2001). While it is not clear which children caused this problem, there is always the possibility that teachers would be under stress when beginning to

teach children with special needs, together with the other children without special needs in their classrooms in the same classroom.

According to Ashman & Elkins (1998) studies indicated that teaching students with emotional and behavioural difficulties was likely to cause pressure. This was usually due to a lack of student discipline and behavioural issues. Also affecting the resultant stress was that other professionals such as psychotherapists, psychologists, and occupational therapists provided limited support to their teaching colleagues. Another study by Whiting & Young (1996) in Queensland also indicated that teachers were under pressure teaching children with special needs. These teachers reported a high degree of stress regarding preparation of teaching resources for individual students and the supervision they have to carry out daily.

Interestingly, a marked difference in stress levels of teachers in special education and regular schools has been reported. For instance, studies pointed out that teachers in regular schools reported more stress in teaching children with special needs than their special education centre colleagues. According to Tredall, (1989, cited in Williams & Gersch, 2004), teachers in regular schools were under pressure to develop individual education plans, have parent consultation time and have time to develop target plans for individual student in the class and at the same time meet the needs of other students. They further stated that in order for teachers to provide teaching to children with special needs, teachers' stress has to be addressed in schools. Male and May (1997) have also stated that stress-related problems have to be addressed by the authorities concerned so that teachers can enjoy their teaching.

In contrast, some studies have reported high degrees of stress in teachers at the special education centres. For example, a study by Williams & Gersch (2004) in London on special education school teachers indicated that stress for teachers was caused by the shortage of equipment and resources, the non-support of specialists to provide assistance for children with moderate and severe disabilities, and the parents unwillingness to provide assistance to both teachers and the children.

Teachers from both school settings had similar responses in reporting that stress builds up from poor attitudes of children with special needs towards completing their academic work and a lack of time to spend with individual children (Williams &

Gersch, 2004). In addition there, is often a perceived lack of respect from senior management within the schools (Male & May, 1997). Teachers from both settings were also under pressure to provide additional programming, especially the individual education plan for each pupil, with the assessment tasks, modification of curriculum and the supervision (Conway, 2005).

### **3.4 Teachers' Workloads**

Teaching demands a lot of planning and preparation for effective teaching and learning and this can represent considerable pressure to meet the demand for individual needs on teachers. Research indicated that, the pressure of a heavy workload is the main concern for the majority of teachers. According to Campbell and Neill, (1993 cited in Ministry of Education, 1999) teachers in New Zealand spend large amounts of time in planning and preparation of lessons, and in teaching children. Apart from teaching, most teachers also have to complete other professional and administrative tasks.

Teaching children with special needs clearly takes a lot of commitment. It inevitably means there is more planning and preparation to meet the needs of a range of abilities. Forlin (1998) stated that having children with special needs in a regular classroom means additional work, which is appended onto teachers existing workloads. A study carried out by Male & May (1997) on primary school teachers in England showed that regular classroom teachers spend between 60 –70 hours per week working at school to meet the needs of children with special needs. As a result many teachers were stressed and eventually burnt out.

However, Prochnow, Kearney, & Carroll-Lind, (2000) stated that not all children with special needs required additional work from the teachers, and it depends on the type of disability. He further elaborated that different disability levels gave different levels of exhaustion for teachers trying to meet children's needs. This means to prepare work for children with mild disabilities would be less exhausting than for children with moderate and severe learning difficulties

In addition, the issue of class size has also contributed to the amount of work teachers have to do to meet the needs of every student. Prochow et al., (2000) stated that if the



number of children with special needs in one class is more than five then the class teacher is under pressure to plan and prepare for each individual student. The teacher would not find enough time to prepare work for the children with special needs as well as the other regular children.

The attitudes, stress and workload of teachers to accommodate children with special needs in the regular classroom can only change when there is collaborative support from other children, teachers, parents and other specialists. Workloads can be shared and supported by everyone, which can make inclusion work effectively (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Smith et al, 2004).

### **3.5 Co-operative Learning**

Co-operative learning is a term that explains how teachers involve students working together in small groups to complete a given task. This kind of learning has been used successfully in schools and has promoted inclusion for students with special needs. According to many authors, cooperative learning has promoted academic achievement, self-confidence, positive attitudes among the students and developed effective social interactions (Gillies, 2002; Suhmidt & Harriman, 1998). It is valued because children in groups share ideas together and learn from each other. Some groups have mixed ability so that they are able to help others and share ideas together (Ainscow, 1999; Gillies, 2002). A study by Watson (1999) on children with learning difficulties, who were grouped into mixed abilities groups, indicated that all children benefited academically through group participation. A similar study by Klingner & Vaughn (1999) in the United States indicated that children with learning difficulties liked to be more involved in discussion of activities in mixed ability groups than in pairs or individually.

Gillies, (2002) reported that the use of cooperative learning has been successful in reading comprehension, problem solving in maths, and understanding the main idea of science experiments. One study provided evidence that children with intellectual difficulties were able to work with their non-disabled peers in science activities easily because they are able to talk with each other and work cooperatively together (Putnam, Rynders, Johnson & Johnson, 1989 cited in Gillies, 2002).

Communication skills can be effectively developed through cooperative learning. When working in a mixed ability group children are able to speak freely among themselves and develop confidence in their language communication (Gross, 2002).

However, studies have also indicated that co-operative learning does not benefit all children. Children with mild disabilities have benefited from the co-operative learning situation but children with severe disabilities have been found to be ignored (Gillies, & Ashman, 2000). This was also shown in a study in America where children with learning difficulties in unstructured groups displayed significantly less involvement than those children in structured groups because often they were not being involved in-group discussions. They were quiet and mostly followed when other group members led (Ross, Smith, Casey & Slavin, 1995).

Other studies have indicated that children with disabilities were often viewed negatively by their peers without disabilities because these children were not participating meaningfully in group discussions and activities. Sometimes they were not told to be involved but just follow what others do for them in the group (Watson, 1990).

The aim of co-operative learning is to promote equal participation from all the children in order for them to develop academic competencies in their classrooms (Ainscow, 1999; Gillies, 2002). Therefore if teachers would like to promote inclusion in the regular classroom, they have to involve every child in groups on assigned tasks and supervise them well so that every child is participating.

### **3.6 Peer Support**

The peer support system is one of the best approaches to helping children with special needs in the regular classroom as it has played a major role in promoting inclusion for all. According to Undvari-Solner and Thousand (1995), peer teaching provides many benefits to all children in the classroom. It provides academic learning for the children and also builds social relationship among children with special needs and their peers. Peer tutoring also operates as co-operative learning and offers support for children working in small groups or in pairs (Kraayenoord & Elkins, 1998; Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995). Children are able to share the knowledge together and

build a good working relationship. A study by Clark, Dyson and Milward (1995) investigating peer tutoring between the children with special needs and their non disabled peers found that non disabled peers provide quality instruction using simplified and appropriate language, which helps the children with special needs to fully understand the concept that the teachers want.

Peer tutoring also provides assistance to ease the class teacher's workload and pressure. Studies have indicated that most teachers use peer tutoring in class work so that the teaching concept is well understood by children with special needs. This is done by assigning tasks to capable students as peer assistants to help children with special needs (Clark, et al., 1995; Hughes, et al., 2001 cited in Smith et al., 2005).

In contrast, peer teaching has been associated with some negative outcomes for children with special needs. There is a concern that interactions between children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers may look more like caregiving. This equates to assisting and instructing them to follow rather than allowing them to contribute in the discussions (Hall & McGregor, 2000). A study of high school students who were involved as peer educators in primary schools, described their interactions with the students with special needs as a caregiving-type of approach. They provided assistance for the children with special needs so that teachers did not have to repeat the same concept again (Hall & McGregor, 2000).

Most children with special needs would like to seek academic assistance from adults, especially their teachers rather than their own non-disabled classmates. It appears that they may feel more comfortable asking their class teachers for assistance in academic work they have difficulty with. In one study children were reluctant to ask their peers for assistance (Kishi & Meyer, 1994 cited in Hall & McGregor, 2000). Another study in a Singapore high school by West, et al., (2004) revealed that children with vision impairments had great difficulty asking peers for assistance. They were too scared of asking for 'continuous support' they might get from peers and at the same time feared being bullied. Therefore, they sought assistance from their class teacher.

Sometimes non-disabled children are not willing to provide constant support for children with special needs because they do not want to share their knowledge. A

report from Benin by UNESCO (1997) indicated that poor peer support in primary schools has made it difficult for teachers to provide assistance individually to children with special needs.

#### **4. Parents/Caregivers' Role**

To effectively implement inclusive education in schools there must be a good working relationship with parents and caregivers. Working with parents of children with special needs in regular schools will assist in the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion (Flavell, 2001; Fraser, 2005; Smith, et al, 2005). Parents usually know more about their children's needs and they will provide necessary information to assist teachers to provide for these. Thus teachers and parents or caregivers have to develop a good mutual understanding to plan for what is best for the child to learn (Fraser, 2005; Mitchell, 1999). The planning of an individual education plan (IEP) is an important way for teachers and parents to come together and develop the learning strategies to meet the child's needs (Moltzen, 2005). A study by Moltzen and Mitchell (1992, cited in Moltzen, 2005) in New Zealand found that parents were essential to supporting teachers to develop effective IEP for their children with special needs.

Parents can also assist class teachers to provide valuable learning in schools. Teachers should invite parents or caregivers to participate in any academic programme that would benefit from parental support (Robinson, 2005). Research has highlighted that parental involvement in many schools activities has developed children's confidence in their learning. A study in an Australian school demonstrated that parents can effectively support teachers to teach children with reading difficulties. Parents whose children had reading problems were involved in the reading lessons to teach their children the meaning of the difficult words and phrases, make meaning out of the pictures and read with them. This helped children to develop their reading skills (Kemp, 1987, 1992 cited in Kraayenoord & Elkins, 1998). Another study in New Zealand by Horton (2001), showed how mothers of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder had developed meaningful working relationships with class teachers. They assisted their children to participate in different activities such as swimming, reading, cooking, etc. organised by the class teachers.

Most parents would like to be voluntarily involved in any activities organised by the school or the teachers. These may include volunteering in using their expertise to teach children in some lessons or taking children out for excursions, sport, and field trips (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005). A study by NiDatale (2002 cited in Grisham-Brown et al., 2005) highlighted how mothers of children with special needs provided a variety of cooking lessons, which provided considerable enjoyment for the children involved.

However, many teachers raise concerns about parents not being fully involved in providing academic assistance for children with special needs. A study in Australia by Stephenson (1996) revealed that teachers felt that many parents of children with special needs do not provide adequate academic support for their children. In this study teachers received no feedback from them on how the child was progressing at home. The degree to which parents become involved differs between countries. A report by UNESCO (1997) on the Ivory Coast, stated that teachers found it difficult to work along with parents of children with learning disabilities because parents were illiterate and there was no suitable learning place back at home such as lights, tables and chairs to help children do their school work. In this researcher's experience a similar situation also applies to parents of children with special needs in Papua New Guinea.

## **5. Collaboration with Colleagues**

The collaboration of many different people in schools should play a significant role in delivering teaching and learning strategies to all children. For inclusion practice to be effectively implemented in the regular schools, the collaboration of the teachers; special education teachers, Board of Trustees, parents, teacher aides, and specialists such as school counsellors, psychotherapists, and occupational therapists is important. Such collaboration will help children with special needs to gain confidence and learn and develop good social relationships within the learning environment (Smith et al., 2005).

## **5.1 The Teacher Aides**

Teacher aides play significant roles when collaborating with class teachers to deliver teaching and learning to children with special needs in regular classrooms. They provide direct support to children in the classroom in many ways. These include working with a particular child with special needs or a small group of children, providing assistance and care for children during non teaching hours, helping facilitate interactions among students and providing support for lessons prepared by class teachers (Kraayenoord & Elkins, 1998; Peterson & Hittie, 2003).

It is clear from research that when teachers and teacher aides develop good working relationships, they share information and learn new skills together and provide learning for all children, including those with special needs. For instance, a study by Davis and Kemp (1995 cited in Kraayenoord & Elkins, 1998) identified real benefits when teacher aides provided sufficient educational support to both the teachers and children with special needs. In this study teachers and teacher aides were able to sit together and organise different activities planned by the class teachers. Another study in New Zealand by Nalder (1999) stated that when primary school teachers worked collaboratively with their teacher aides marked improvements were made in reading skills for children with reading difficulties.

However, several authors have indicated that most teacher aides do not have the knowledge and skills to provide effective assistance to teachers in the classrooms. Most teacher aides have not received proper training in the field of special education to assist children with different educational needs. There should be ongoing professional development training for teacher aides so that they can perform their roles in the classrooms effectively. Several studies in schools around New Zealand also confirmed that many teacher aides were employed without any training (Hulson, 2000; Kavermann, 1998; Lai et al., 2003; Lloyd, Wilton & Townsend, 2000, cited in MacArthur, et al., 2005). A study by Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay and Stahl, (2001) pointed out some issues that need to be considered for teacher aides working with children with special needs. These included job training for the teacher aides, effective communication between the teacher aides, teachers and the school administration, and involving teacher aides in IEP meetings, staff meetings.

Another concern is that often classroom teachers rely on teacher aides to provide academic assistance for children with special needs. According to Giangreco et al., (2001 cited in Smith et al., 2005) teachers in regular classrooms in United States, whether willingly or reluctantly, delegate full responsibilities to teacher aides to provide educational learning to children with special needs. This means that inclusive practice is not positively accepted by such teachers. Similar studies have also been conducted in New Zealand and have produced the same results (Hulson, 2000; Kavermann, 1998; Lai et al., 2003; Lloyd, Wilton & Townsend, 2000, cited in MacArthur, et al., 2005).

## **5.2 Special Education Personnel**

Special educational personnel are qualified trained specialists that are associated with helping students with special educational needs. They are actively involved in assisting class teachers to address children's special needs, which may be academic and or social. These professionals include; the psychologist, speech and language therapist, the occupational therapist, physiotherapist, the Resource Teacher of Learning Behaviours (RTLBs).

Inclusive schools fully engage such specialists to 'assist' the teachers and teacher aides to provide essential support for students with special educational needs. Ideally the professionals as part of the team or individually, with the classroom teacher, will develop specific strategies to assist the class teacher to meet the needs of each child with special needs (Bauer & Shea, 1999; Porter, 1995). They should develop a variety of activities to help teachers solve problems and workout the best alternatives for these children (Porter, 1995; Vargo, 1998). For instance, an occupational therapist will assist in developing the motor skills of a pupil who has a physical disability. A speech language therapist deals with children who have language and communication difficulties (Wright & Graham, 1997). The physiotherapist deals with children's gross and fine motor skills, and the behaviour specialists work with teachers to help support students with moderate learning and behavioural difficulties (O'Brien & Ryba, 2005).

Several studies have indicated that appropriate support from specialists is essential to making education possible for students with special educational needs in the regular

classrooms. The children should be the main feature of such support, and research has indicated that both the specialist and the teachers can learn a lot from each other. A study by Wright & Graham (1997), on how teachers and specialists work together to provide academic support for children with special needs, discovered that teachers who worked with physiotherapists gained more understanding on how to assist children with physical disabilities. A similar study, again by Wright and Kersner, (1999) on collaborative efforts between specialists and teachers, noted that effective collaboration meant more effective teaching and assistance to students with physical disabilities. Another study in New Zealand by Rangi (2001), revealed that Maori students with learning and behavioural difficulties were able to develop positive learning outcomes and improvement in behaviour when RTLBS and teachers worked collaboratively.

Support from specialists is important because they make inclusion work in regular schools. This support enables teachers to focus more on educating children than being overly involved with other aspects of a child's special needs (Bauer & Shea, 1999; Vargo, 1998).

## **6. Curriculum**

The curriculum provides the educational programme to all the children in the class regardless of who they are. An inclusive curriculum means that there is one curriculum for all the students to participate in (Conway, 2005; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Many countries in the world adapt the inclusive curriculum so as to provide equal educational learning for all children. In New Zealand, the Curriculum Framework principles are focused on each individual pupil who is at the centre of all the teaching and learning programmes (Mitchell, 1999). Likewise, in Papua New Guinea there is only one official curriculum for all children to use (Department of Education, 2002) This means children with special educational needs should follow the regular curriculum and teachers should not use a different curriculum.

However, while the curriculum is the same, teaching and learning resources should be modified to meet the needs of the individual child. Teachers need to be innovative and creative to provide activities to appropriately differentiate their programmes



(Mitchell, 1999). For instance, a child with a visual impairment has to read books translated into Braille, while the other non disabled children can read from normal reading books (Mitchell, 1999). A study by Kliewer and Landis (1999) on children with moderate to severe disabilities showed that children participated and gained improvements in their reading and writing skills when the instruction was not closely matched to their specific abilities.

It is important that the IEP should be based on the pupil's area of need for improvement for each subject, and teachers should work towards that target (Moltzen, 2005; Smith et al., 2005). Assessment should be based on the learning achievements of the individual child and not on comparisons with other children or against area or class norms progress (Mentis, et al., 2005; Moltzen, 2005; Smith et al., 2005).

### ***Section 3***

This section elaborates on some important aspects that constitute effective practices inclusive beyond the classroom context. One of the major considerations here is funding, which provides the financial assistance, staff professional development, curriculum materials, teaching resources, special equipment and facilities to make inclusive education work effectively. The section also discusses the cultural factors that impact on the implementation of an inclusive approach.

## **1. Government Support of the Programme**

There are many ways a Government contributes to provide an inclusive environment and in particular to the implementation of inclusion in educational settings. The most important ones to consider are discussed below.

### **1.1 Financial Support**

Financial support is a very important aspect of the effective implementation of the inclusive education programme. In most countries financial assistance is given by the national government to assist schools successfully implement an inclusive education programmes in schools (Frost, 2002). For example, in New Zealand, there are different funding schemes under special education to assist students with special needs in regular schools. These following funds are provided by the Ministry of Education to assist children with diverse learning needs: The Special Education Grant

(SEG) is given to all schools to assist children with moderate special educational needs. The Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) is the fund provided for “extra teaching, special programmes, therapy, consumables and education support” (O’Brien & Ryba, 2005. p.28). The School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF) is used to pay for paraprofessionals (teacher aides) who provide care and supervision to children with high health needs in over a medium or long-term period (Mitchell, 1999; O’Brien & Ryba, 2005). The Board of Trustees and the principals have to budget according to how well the money can be spent to support the learning of children with special needs. However section 4 of this literature reviews, the writer would further explain in more detail on the Papua New Guinea context of support.

Effective inclusive schools use the funds to provide teaching and learning resources and the special learning equipment for the students with special needs. These include, such things as assistive technology, large print books, mobility support, etc (Lyons, 2005; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). The funds can also be used for buildings and create a barrier free environment in the schools.

The funding of staff training programme for teachers to gain more knowledge in different areas of disabilities is vital. This assists teachers to broaden their knowledge and skills so that they can effectively teach children with diverse learning needs (Lyons, 2005). Studies have indicated that teachers must be well trained in order to provide sufficient support to children with special needs in the classrooms. Funding should also be provided to incorporate specialists into the school to assist class teachers to plan teaching and learning strategies. Specialists include clinical psychologists, therapists, and music teachers (Ministry of Education, 2000).

However, the allocation of financial support has always been an issue for many School Boards of Trustees, administrators and teachers because most times the Government says, ‘there is a lack of funds to assist’ (Prochnow et al., 2000 cited in Connelly, 2004). Many countries cannot afford to provide adequate teaching and learning resources for each school in order to accommodate children with diverse learning needs, because of financial constraints. A report by UNESCO (1997) in Morocco stated that the financial issue of training teachers and community

rehabilitation officers to use Braille machines was raised several times because of the number of children with visual impairment not being accepted in schools. However the Government has yet to take into consideration funding for the training. Another report again by UNESCO (1997) in Guinea stated that teachers need more training in the field of special education nevertheless, the Government has not provided enough fund to have these teachers on training. Hence this has dragged the inclusive education programme too long. Therefore, if an inclusive education programme is to progress and operate well in schools, funding should be considered vital.

## **1.2 Staff Development Programme**

Staff development is the vital part of an effective inclusive implementation plan. In order to effectively implement inclusive practice in schools, teachers need to constantly enhance their knowledge about different areas of special education (Conway, 2005; Flavell, 2001; Frost, 2002; Wolger, 1998). Teachers must have additional training within the field of special education to provide effective teaching and learning programmes to children with special needs (Conway, 2005). There are numerous international examples of the relationship between teacher, professional development and increased effectiveness and confidence in teaching children with special needs (e.g., Hall, & Dixon, 1995; Mushoriwa, 2001; Za'za, Chouaib, & Merhe, 1997)

In contrast, there are other studies, which indicate that some teachers do not want to teach children with special needs because they do not have the knowledge, skills and experience. They feel that they need to have proper training to equip themselves before teaching children with special needs in the regular classrooms (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996 cited in Smith et al., 2004; Westwood & Graham, 2003 cited in Conway, 2005). A study in England reported that primary school teachers supported the inclusive education programme yet felt they had insufficient knowledge and inadequate experience to teach children with special needs and therefore needed more training (Avramidis et al., 2000 cited in Connelly, 2004). A similar study in New Zealand has shown that most teachers have no formal training in special education and need additional professional development to support inclusion. It is essential, that teachers be trained in the areas of teaching and learning skills, curriculum development and modification, and classroom organisation in order to provide

effective inclusive programmes at the schools (Pronchnow, 2000, cited in Connelly, 2004). Some disabilities are difficult to manage and need teachers to be specially trained in order to teach these children. For example, specialist support, such as using of Braille machines is not possible without specific training (West et al., 2004).

Many teachers need more training to develop assessment strategies and effective IEP for their students (Conway, 2005; Wolger, 1998). Other training should focus on practical ways to provide effective inclusive education programme. In Dublin, for example, selected mainstream teachers had an in-service course on how to do timetabling, arrange for transportation and also develop strategies to manage all the children together. These basic considerations helped with accommodating children with special needs in their regular classrooms (Walsh, Shevlin, O'Moore, DeLacey, & Stritch, (1996).). Teachers benefit from having the opportunity to exchange ideas, gain new skills and share ways of planning (Walsh, et al., 1996). Board of Trustees also should be provided with training so that they also can understand the importance of providing support for an effective inclusive programme. Their role may include the development of school policies, providing financial assistance and physical resources to their schools (Mitchell, 1999).

### **1.3 Resources and Facilities**

Teaching resources and materials as well as the school facilities, are part of the contributing factors in supporting inclusive practice. When a school is well equipped with basic teaching and learning resources, it makes teachers' jobs easier and the learning outcomes of the children will improve. For example, being able to access reading books of different levels for all children helps children with reading difficulties to develop reading competencies at their level (Gross, 1996). Sometimes it is as basic as having the letters of alphabet in both concrete and pictorial forms to help children with learning and writing difficulties to practice their spelling (Gross, 1996). In some cases this does not mean obtaining sophisticated materials and at times creative teachers can use natural materials to support learning. For instance, in Papua New Guinea children can use tree nuts in maths for counting.

Assistive technology such as computers, also enhances learning for children with special needs. Some of these resources are sophisticated and expensive while others

are uncomplicated and easy-to use (Bray, Brown & Green, 2004; Lyons, 2005). These simpler resources include videotapes, hearing aids, tape recorders, musical instruments, communication boards, pictorial charts, etc.

Teachers should also need to modify their classrooms in order to accommodate all the children. The classroom environment should enable all students, especially those with physical and sensory impairments, to participate fully in the classroom (Heward, 1996). Proper positioning, seating and opportunities for regular movement are very important for many children with disabilities inside the classroom (Heward, 1996).

Schools should have provided ease of access so that all students, regardless of their abilities, can move independently around the school environment without any obstructions (Mitchell, 1999). The environment should provide children who have special needs with barrier free access into offices, classrooms, library, toilets, playing fields, pathways and other facilities at the schools. When the facilities are barrier-free, it makes it easy for children with special needs to interact with others academically and socially (Mitchell, 1999). For instance, the pathway to the playing field should be barrier free so a child with a wheelchair can go to the field during break times to play with his or her friends.

## **2. Culture Concept**

Cultural factors in the educational context are very influential in students' learning (Bevan-Brown, 2003). Culture determines how teachers teach children. To get the most out of learning, teachers need to understand each individual in the classroom and be aware of the child's cultural background and his or her family and community values. This can have a pronounced impact on the quality of the student's educational experience (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Fraser, 2005).

Nowadays schools in many countries are comprised of different ethnic groups and therefore, it is important to understand these differences. Often cultural beliefs, norms and values can be incorporated into classroom learning. For instance, in dealing with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, the use of bicultural approach in counselling can become an effective way to solve behavioural issues

(Macfarlane, 2005). Yet educationally, this limits opportunities for girls and is not consistent with the overall goal of education in Papua New Guinea. A recent newspaper report by the Post Courier (2006) stated that the National Department of Education in Papua New Guinea has to develop specific policies for girls if women are to play a major role in the development of the country. Currently there were no specific policies that benefit girls in school which could also act as incentives to encourage the education of women. There were instead cultural practises and policies that are destroying girls' education, resulting in more female students dropping out of the system. Sometimes there is a tension between particular cultural beliefs and practices, and the values being espoused by the school. The goals of inclusion may run counter to specific cultural values (Bevan-Brown, 2003).

In terms of educating children with disabilities in regular schools the cultural implications have some impacts. In Enga province, children with moderate and severe disabilities have to stay in the villages, under the care of the parents and relatives. They are not allowed to enrol at schools because of their disabilities, which make parents reluctant to bring them out to schools. When encouraging peer teaching, culture generally prefers children of the opposite sex and from the different tribes not to help one another in their academic work. Therefore, it is important to understand each one's ethnicity and provide learning that would best benefit everyone.

#### Section Four

This section explains the context of the study, and examines the geographical background of Papua New Guinea and the system of education operating in the country from the colonial stage to the present time. There is a review of the history of Special Education in Papua New Guinea and the policies being established and implemented in the country.

### **1. Background information on Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea is a country in the Pacific, which occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. The island is situated south of the equator and 150 kilometres north of Australia. It shares a political border with Indonesia, where the western half of the island is the province of Irian Jaya is located (Wikipedia, 2005). Papua New

Guinea comprises over 600 islands but 85% of its land area (463,840 square kilometres) is on the mainland. This is mostly covered by tropical rain forests and divided by massive mountain ranges, swamps, and fast flowing rivers (Department of Education, 2004). The country has been divided into four regions; Highland region, Momase region, Islands region and Papuan Region. The population is approximately 5.2 million and 85% of the people live in rural areas.

Over 700 different languages are spoken throughout the 20 provinces. There are three official languages of Papua New Guinea. English is the language of instruction, which is used in all educational institutions and employment sectors but most people speak the creole language called Tok Pisin as a *lingua franca*. Motu is the third official language and is spoken mostly by people in the southern region of Papua. Almost one third of the population can read and write in English, yet do not speak it often (Department of Education, 2004).

Papua New Guinea gained its independence in 1975 from Australia. It is a monarchy system of government, where the Prime Minister is the Head of State. The capital city of Papua New Guinea is Port Moresby.

## **2. The Education System**

The colonial system of education in Papua New Guinea has changed enormously over the past three decades. Papua New Guinea was a colony of the British and Australian Governments and these countries were responsible for establishing the education system in the 1940s (Department of Education, 2004). Schools were built and children were enrolled using the Australian curriculum. Different churches have also established schools using both a Christian and the Australian curriculum. The church converted people into Christianity by using schools as target areas and at the same time training potential students to become a skilled human resource for the country. The state schools also educated children to prepare them for the country's skilled labour force (Pau, 1993; Waiko, 1997, cited in Rombo, 2003).

After the Independence in 1975, the Government of Papua New Guinea took full responsibility for administering the education system of the country (Department of

Education, 2004). The church agencies no longer provided their own curriculum, teaching staff and their salaries but provided the teaching and learning facilities while the government provided policy guidelines, teachers and their salaries for each school (Rombo, 2003). In 1978, the administrative, political and economic powers from the National Government were decentralised to the provincial level. Each of the 20 provinces was responsible for planning, funding and providing teaching positions for each school in the province (Department of Education, 2004; Rombo, 2003). The Division of Education set up Provincial Education Boards to manage all the educational issues within each province.

### **3. Educational Changes**

Towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, educational changes occurred and the National Government introduced a new system of education known as Education Reform. The report published in 1985 entitled ‘A Philosophy of Education’ was the birth of the education reform (Department of Education, 1986). The Philosophy of Education emphasised that every person is “dynamically free from being dominated and oppressed but being recognised as a whole person where he she can equally participate in every aspect of human potential such as education, employment and socialisation” (Department of Education, 1986. pg. 6).

The purpose for the change was to acknowledge and implement the national goals and directive principles based on the national constitution of the country (Department of Education, 2002). The Philosophy of Education mainly emphasised the integral human development and equality and participation of the national constitution as very important for the education reform system (Department of Education, 1986). The education system should recognise every child as an important person who would develop potentially and contribute meaningfully to the society. Every person should be treated equally regardless of gender, ethnicity or disabilities (Department of Education, 1986). The previous education system mainly emphasised formal employment, which influenced every citizen, that there were always job opportunities after completion of their education. Parents’ perception of educating their children was that they would find a good job and help support the family. Nevertheless, the new education reform system emphasised meeting the educational needs of the



students who would return back to their village to become self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of the country (Department of Education, 2002).

#### **4. Universal Primary Education**

With the Education Reform system, the Department of Education introduced the Universal Primary Education (Department of Education, 2002). This meant restructuring the formal education system from the elementary level to the secondary level. The purpose of the restructuring was to provide education to all the citizens of the country. Many children had been denied opportunities to further their education due to the limited spaces available at the next level. There were many school leavers who dropped out from grade 6 (year 6), grade 8 (year 8), and grade 10 (year 10). Parents were very much concerned that children did not spend enough time at school in order to learn useful information for life back at the village. The education system had not prepared the children for the reality of life in the village (Department of Education, 1986; Department of Education, 2002).

The education reform system was designed to address most of the department's weaknesses in providing better education. This meant there was an increase in the number of years at schools, which now gives the children more time to spend in learning. Education in schools involves teaching children to either adapt to job opportunities in the public and private sectors or to become self-employed back in the village. The education mainly focuses on literacy, numeracy as well as basic technology and agriculture (Department of Education, 2002).

The restructuring of education developed into several stages. The first stage known as Elementary Education saw children at the age of six start the preparatory class and continue to elementary three with initial literacy and general education in their own vernacular. Tok Pisin is often used alongside their own vernacular. Then the bridging of English comes in the third year to provide the curriculum concept more clearly (Department of Education, 2002). The second stage of Primary Education begins from grade three to grade eight. Children after completing the elementary levels, move on to primary education. English now becomes the language of instructions rather than Tok Pisin or children's own vernacular. The third stage is the secondary level, which

begins from grade nine and continues to grade 12. High schools were changed to secondary schools and no longer took grades seven to 10 but rather from grade nine to twelve. The final stage, the tertiary level includes colleges, technical institutions and universities. Students with above average grades in academic work have the opportunity to choose which institution they would like to further their studies in (Department of Education, 2002).

## **5. History of Special Education in Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea, like many other developing countries, has many children with disabilities. There is no national data for children with disabilities as they are not registered either with the Department of Health, or Welfare Services (Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). A pilot survey carried out in 1979 in the Papuan Region suggested that about 10 percent of the population suffer from at least one disability and about 2.5 percent of the disabled population would benefit from the rehabilitation services. From the study, it was discovered that the leading categories of disability were hearing and visual impairment. These disabilities were caused by poor health and hygiene and through complications during delivery at birth (Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). Other disabilities, such as in the physical and intellectual areas, including learning difficulties, and varieties of cerebral palsy were considered to be caused through cultural beliefs such as sorcery, breaking of food taboos, demons or tropical diseases (Frost, 2002). Therefore, it is believed that almost 10 percent of Papua New Guinean children have some form of disability (Education Department, 1996).

To bring such people with disability out of the villages for medical assistance and rehabilitation programmes is very difficult because of the cultural beliefs and attitudes (Frost, 2002; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). Parents and relatives of the child with a disability do not want to expose themselves to the public and have believed that they can deal with the disability within their own culture for healing. However, with the introduction of health services, most parents and relatives now disregard the cultural beliefs and bring such people with disabilities for medical assistance.

## **6. Identification and Labelling of People with Disabilities**

There has been no formal national register kept for people with disabilities in the country. The only form of identification depends on whether the family members report to either the rural health workers or a church agency representative for assistance. Some cases are brought to light by community outreach programmes in primary schools or villages, which are conducted by the health workers (Frost, 2002; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). However in most cases these children with disabilities cannot be assisted in terms of medical assistance or for educational opportunities due to the following reasons. First, there is an attitude and cultural perspective that makes families reluctant to bring the children forward to be assisted. Second, the Government actually does nothing to help such children with disabilities in their own settings, especially at a district level. Third, most of the villages are not connected with the main districts or the provincial towns due to lack of a road system. Moreover, because of the geographical location of these districts within the country, it is difficult to reach everyone with disability.

Most of the people with disabilities are being catered for by the family members and relatives at home. In most cases, these people are being treated with love and kindness but nevertheless, they are denied the opportunities of work, to acquire status, marry, become independent, make decisions about their own destiny, or contribute meaningfully to their community. In such communities, people with disabilities have often been treated as children, even well into their adulthood. Others who have been identified by the authorities (i.e. the health workers, social workers, and teachers) are referred to resource centres to be catered for. This is where they are being provided with medical attention as well as being taught basic daily living skills (Frost, 2002).

## **7. Children with Disabilities at School Level**

It is impossible to have a correct figure on the number of students with disabilities in Papua New Guinea schools because no national data has been collected since independence in 1975. This means that decision and policy makers have given limited consideration to children with special needs within the schools. There has been total ignorance in dealing with such students (Frost, 2002).

In the different levels of schools, from elementary to secondary schools there are approximately up to 10% of students with a hearing-related condition. Others have learning difficulties or mild disabilities. There are very few students enrolled in schools with severe and multiple disabilities, receive assistance from Community Based Rehabilitation Officers (Frost, 2002).

## **8. Provision of Special Education Programme**

Since Independence special education has been given a low priority. As the country was trying to adapt to the western ideology of education, the National Department of Education mainly focused on providing full education to the children without disabilities at all levels of education (Department of Education, 1993). Additional educational programmes such as special education were not considered as important to the human resource development for the new nation. Although the National Department of Education has recognised that educating children with disabilities was important during the transition period after Independence, a commitment was made latterly (Department of Education, 1993).

Therefore, most of the children with special needs were catered mainly by the Non Government Organizations (NGOs) such as charity organisations, church agencies and the local disability organisations (Department of Education, 1993; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). These organisations built special resource centres to cater for the children with visual impairments (Mt Zion Blind Centre), hearing impairments (Callan Services for Disabled Persons), emotional and behavioural difficulties (Wewak Boys Town), and for other areas of severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism and physical disabilities (Cheshire Home). These NGOs provided basic education for the children with special needs (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994). Today there are a total of 13 different resource centres in the country to cater for children's education and daily living (Department of Education, 1993; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994).

## **9. Recognition of Special Education Programmes**

Like many western countries, Papua New Guinea has recognised the need to give people with disabilities the right to participate equally in building the nation. The

National Government established the National Board of Disabled Persons (NBDP) in 1978 to draw up policies to cater for the interest of people with disabilities (Department of Education, 1993; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994).

However, the progress of developing the policies and guidelines to recognise the special education programme as part of the educational programme has progressed at a very slow pace since Independence. In fact, the National Department of Education seemed to totally ignore the implementation of these policies and guidelines until 1991. In 1991, the NBDP and the Sector Review Committee strongly recommended that the National Department of Education should seriously consider implementing the special education programme in schools. The NBDP pointed out that the Philosophy of Education declared equal rights and participation for every person to be educated regardless of their disability. Thus children with disabilities should have equal rights to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers. The recommendation was that the special education centres would still educate those children with special needs that could not be accommodate in regular classroom settings (Department of Education 1993; Vlaardingerbroek, et al., 1994).

## **10. Special Education Legislation and Policies**

In 1993, the National Department of Education formulated a national Special Education Policy that included three keys concepts, which were to underpin the development of special education in the country for the current era. In essence, these concepts are:

- i. Children with disabilities should have the same rights of access to education as other regular children.
- ii. The Government of Papua New Guinea and the National Department of Education should allocate an equitable proportion of resources, provide special education teacher training and provide specialist teachers to support the education of students with special needs and
- iii. Students with disabilities should attend a regular school along with regular students in all cases where that is feasible.

(Department of Education, 1993 cited in Frost, 2002, p. 51)

The National Department of Education also formulated the Special Education Policy and Guidelines. These goals basically acknowledge the country's constitution on the principles of social justice and equity, which declare respect for the dignity of the individual and community interdependence. These goals are:

- i. The Constitution upholds the right of every child to basic education. Therefore, the State will promote equality of access to relevant, quality education for all students.
- ii. Children with special needs have a right to an educational program suitable to their needs. Special education shall aim to develop the maximum potential of every child with special needs, enabling self-reliance and a full and happy life as far as possible in an integrated setting in the company of a normal range of children of the community.
- iii. The specific objectives of special education shall be the development of learning competencies and the nurturing of values, which will help learners with special needs to become useful and effective members of the society.
- iv. The long-term goal of special education shall be integration or mainstreaming of children with special needs into the normal school system and into the community.

(Department of Education, 1993, cited in Frost, 2002, p.57)

## **11. Directives and Implementation**

In order to implement the Special Education Policy effectively, the National Department of Education has developed several directives. These contain a significant amount of detailed, practical information and objectives, which serve as a guide. The policy covers all students with disabilities (physical, intellectual, behavioural or sensory) who require educational adaptation. It does not extend to students who are gifted. The policy applies to all levels of education in Papua New Guinea, including higher education (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002). The policy includes the following guidelines and support services in the implementation of inclusive practices:

**11.1 Teacher Preparation.** All teachers colleges should include training in special education. Special education courses should be developed and taught, at the pre-service stage, and these trainee teachers should also have practical experiences in

classrooms. In-service programmes in special education, particularly on inclusive education would be made available through special education resource centres, teachers colleges and provincial education offices (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002). All teachers, especially those with certificate in teaching, should attend in-service training in special education (Department of Education, 1993).

**11.2 Special Education Resource Centres.** Provinces with special education centres should support teachers to deliver special education programmes in regular schools. Specialist teachers would assist regular teachers to develop different inclusive programmes. These include curriculum modification, teaching skills, plans for individual education plan, etc (Frost, 2002). In-service programmes would be developed in different areas of special education to train teachers in schools (Department of Education, 1993).

**11.3 Community Based Rehabilitation Education.** Community Based Rehabilitation officers would be stationed in each District and work with children with special needs that are unable to attend regular schools due to geographical reasons, culture, or lack of special equipment and mobility access (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002). Their roles are to provide formal and informal learning to children with special needs such as the basic living skills, basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is to promote the understanding of inclusive education at the village and the community level (Frost, 2002).

**11.4 Assessment of Children.** Teachers in schools would conduct screening and other assessment procedures, to identify students with special educational needs. Assistance would be sought from specialist teachers from special education centres, parents and health workers, so that appropriate assessment can be undertaken. Community Rehabilitation Officers should also do screening and assessment tests with those children in the villages (Frost, 2002).

**11.5 Enrolment and Organisation.** All schools would enrol children with special educational needs. Boards of Management, principals and teachers should accept children with special needs who have disabilities that are able to be accommodated at the school, (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002). Some children with severe

disabilities would have bridging programmes from special education centres into regular schools, but in general they would probably stay at special education centres. A regular class is only to accommodate a maximum of three students with severe disability at a time. Both the class teacher and the specialist teachers from the special education centres would provide the student with educational and social support (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002).

**11.6 Curriculum and Instruction.** Students with special needs would follow the official curriculum. There should not be another curriculum apart from the Department of Education's official curriculum. However, the curriculum could be modified to accommodate the needs of every student (Frost, 2002).

**11.7 Administration and Funding.** The National Government with the collaboration from the National Department of Education and other agencies, would provide school the necessary additional funding, and required modification to new school buildings. Board of management should provide assistance to meet the needs of every student regardless of the disability. The use of special equipment, teaching and learning resources should be the priority for students' learning (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002)

## **12. Special Education Unit**

In 1994, a Special Education Unit was established within the National Department of Education on the recommendation of the National Government (Department of Education, 2002). The function of this unit was to plan and formulate policies for teacher training, research, curriculum development and funding, to ensure that special education programmes were effectively implemented (Department of Education, 2002).

## **13. Teacher Training**

Training teachers in the area of special education is very important in order to promote inclusive practices in all levels of educational institutions. The aim is to prepare teachers to work with children with special needs in regular school classes. They can also become advocates in the community and villages for inclusion of all



students with disabilities in their local schools and communities. Hence the National Department of Education recommended these following institutions to train teachers in the field of special education (Department of Education, 1993).

**13.1 Teachers' Colleges.** The National Department of Education included special education courses as part of all primary school teachers' college's academic programmes. A lecturer's position for special education was also created in each of the teachers' colleges and courses were officially taught from 1994 in some of the colleges who trained specialist teachers (Department of Education, 1993). Currently, special education courses taught are known as compulsory subjects where pre-service students have to pass both theory and practice in this subject to graduate. Some colleges, such as St Benedict in East Sepik Province, are more involved in rehabilitation programmes and teaching practices in special education resource centres and self contained units in primary schools (Department of Education, 1993).

**13.2 In-service Training.** In 1999, a one-year certificate course in Special Education was introduced and offered to suitable and interested primary school teachers as part of the in-service package programme. It was a one-year course on sign language and taught at St Paul Teachers College in Rabaul. The Department of Education later transferred the programme to Papua New Guinea Education Institute in Port Moresby, but courses were focussed on all areas of disability. The special education resource centre in each of the province has also provided provincial workshops and in-service programmes for both the elementary and primary school teachers where funding allows (Department of Education, 1993).

**13.3 University of Goroka.** The University of Goroka is the only institution in the country that provides teacher training for high school and secondary school teachers. It also provides in-service training for teachers to upgrade their qualification from diploma level to degree. The Special Education Unit has negotiated with the University of Goroka to include special education courses as part of their academic programme for high school and secondary school teachers (Department of Education, 2002). The special education programme was officially introduced in 2000 but only for in-service teachers. The special education courses are yet to be introduced into the pre-service teachers' academic programme. With the national plan for education for

2005 – 2014 period, the National Department of Education has recommended that the University of Goroke introduce special education course for the secondary school teacher training students in 2008 (Department of Education, 2004).

**13.4 Primary and Secondary Training Education Programme (PASTEP).** The Australian Government assistance through the PASTEP programme organizes special education workshops and training for teachers' colleges special education lecturers of teachers' colleges. This is to equip them with content knowledge, as most lecturers do not have the qualifications and background knowledge on special education (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002).

**13.5 Overseas Training.** The Special Education Unit has recommended a few suitable and interested teachers for overseas training in Australia and New Zealand, countries close to Papua New Guinea so that they can become an academic asset for the country (Department of Education, 2002). There are other students who apply directly to institutions and are taking special education courses and should return to the country to support the programme.

## **14. Funding**

Funding is still a major issue that needs more consideration. In 1994 The National Department of Education through the National Government funded all special education teaching positions in all Special Education Centres and the teachers' colleges (Department of Education, 1993; Department of Education, 2002). Funds were allocated for curriculum developments for special education programmes. Funds are made available for training purposes, for instance, sending a suitable teacher for overseas training. However, there were no funds made available specifically for children with special needs in the regular schools. The government only provides subsidy for each primary school. It is at the discretion of the Board of Management of each school to provide support for children with special needs in the school.

## **15. Summary of Inclusive Education in Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea is a large country with a high proportion of schools distributed across remote areas. Most schools are not located near the cities or large towns while

others do not have road access to the provincial centres. There are many children with special needs in these remote areas of the country. In the main, these children do not get a formal education in their local schools because of their disabilities. The only way that Papua New Guinea can provide formal education for children with special needs across the nation is by adopting the inclusive education policy.

The National Department of Education has taken initiatives to introduce special education courses into educational institutions, like the teachers colleges and universities. This is to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with content knowledge of how best to can assist students with special needs in the classrooms. The National Government is only providing financial assistance to children with special needs in the special education resource centres however, assistance may be provided to children with special needs in regular schools in a near future. Currently, the government is only focussing on funding all the children in primary schools.

With inclusive education many children with special needs will have greater chances of being educated with other children in their local schools. It is believed that most children with mild disabilities will benefit from the inclusive programme. Children with severe disabilities in remote areas will be provided for by bridging programmes between home and school (Frost, 2002). This is due to the fact that, most schools do not have adequate facilities to cater for such children. Papua New Guinea's inclusive education policy would not abandon all segregated options. It is intended that special education resource centres will continue to provide special classes for students with severe disabilities (Department of Education, 1993; Frost, 2002).

## **16. Summary**

This chapter examines the factors that characterise an effective inclusive practice into four main themes. The first theme explains what disability means and the development of discourses, which relate to how society labels people with disabilities. However, with the 'rights' discourse, people with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to participate meaningfully in their society. The history of inclusion began when parents of children with special needs, special education teachers and advocates felt that segregation of children with special needs limited them in both

achieving academically and developing social competency with children without special needs. These persuasions have led to the development of different international policies of human rights and equal participation for children with disabilities.

The second and third themes focus on the success of implementing inclusive education in regular classrooms and this involves three factors. First, teachers' attitudes and experiences in teaching children with special needs were considered very important for children with special needs to benefit both academically and socially. Second, there needed to be support of parents, specialists, other teachers and Boards of Trustees to make inclusion work. Third, there needed to be adequate support from the government in terms of funding and training.

The fourth theme then examines the progress of inclusive education in Papua New Guinea. While Papua New Guinea has made significant changes in the education system, very little attention has been given to promoting the special education programme since 1991. As Papua New Guinea is a signatory to the United Nations document on equal human rights, the National Department now has realised the need to focus on implementing inclusive education.

## CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in this study. It outlines the two research designs and their relevance to the study. These include both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The data collection procedures are presented and the researcher outlines the research context and the method of sampling used to select the research participants. The chapter also discusses the two types of data instruments used to collect the data. These include the descriptive survey questionnaire and semi structured interviews. There is discussion of the ethical considerations that guided the study, and finally some of the problems encountered during data collections are elaborated on. This research has employed the descriptive research approach which can be used both in quantitative and qualitative research.

### **1. Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research, according to Creswell (2002, p. 58), is defined as, “An inquiry approach useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature.” A quantitative research approach relies primarily on the collection of quantitative data, in this case, from survey questionnaire, and focuses on the testing of a hypothesis (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Quantitative research is also sometimes said to be “confirmatory because researchers test or attempt to confirm the hypothesis” (Johnson & Christensen, 2000. p. 17). Here, the focus of the quantitative research was determine teachers’ knowledge of and attitudes towards inclusion, their experiences in teaching students with special needs, the factors they considered essential to support the inclusive policy, and the impediments to the progress of inclusive in schools. The research is aimed at identifying cause and effect relationships, with regard to inclusive education. In order to understand the usefulness of the teachers’ views on the inclusive education policy and their experiences of teaching children with special needs in the regular classrooms, the researcher developed a quantitative research tool, in the form of a questionnaire, using both closed and open questions. The information gathered should enable the researcher to understand in greater depth of the teachers’ understanding and

experience of teaching children with special needs and inclusion. The findings from the quantitative aspect of this study (i.e., the questionnaire) formed the basis for the design of qualitative aspect (i.e., the interview schedule). The researcher identified from the questionnaire areas where it was considered important to explore a greater depth and detail through face to face interviews.

## **2. Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is defined by Creswell (2002, p. 58) as:

an enquiry useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the researcher asks the research participants broad and specific questions in order to collect detailed information and analysis the information for description and themes. From the data, the researcher interprets the meaning of the information drawing on personal reflection and past research.

The qualitative research approach is used in the second phase of this research. Qualitative research is useful for expanding further on the quantitative research data because it helps to establish a relationship that may create changes in the research settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) stated that qualitative research plays a discovery role in order to gain the richness of the data. It is also used to discover the main ideas and relationships related to the research topic. In addition, Bouma (1996) emphasised that when exploring more in-depth, qualitative research would provide useful information to the researcher to either support or contradict the findings from the quantitative data. Furthermore, Best & Kahn (1998) emphasised that qualitative data is useful within the research setting because participants would freely express their thoughts, perceptions and experiences in more detail in relation to the research topic. For instance, since the study was focused on teachers' views and experiences while teaching children with special needs, most research participants would express their personal reflections in relation to how they have experienced or viewed the said topic. Thus, in order to obtain in-depth information on the research topic and to articulate with the quantitative questionnaire, semi structured interview questions were used. The qualitative data would seek to inform the same questions as the quantitative data, but would provide greater insight, especially into the thinking behind the responses.

This study incorporates some of the basic characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm. These include first that the research usually involves fieldwork where the researcher has to physically visit the selected site and the research participants in order to conduct the interviews in their natural settings (Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Merriam, 1998). In this research the researcher visited each of the selected seven primary schools in each of the five districts of Enga province, observed the school routines and conducted interviews with the teachers. Second, the data collected is in detail with direct quotations from the research participants' personal perspectives and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Merriam, 1998). Teachers who were interviewed shared their personal perspectives on the inclusive education policy and experiences in teaching children with disabilities in the classroom. The researcher then attempted to make meaning out of the information provided by the research participants.

### **3. Research Design**

Two research designs were employed to collect data from the respondents. These include the questionnaire and the interview.

#### **3.1 The Questionnaire** (see Appendix 4)

The questionnaire had a set of questions, focusing on knowledge, attitudes and experiences in teaching children with special needs aimed at collecting sufficient information about the existing issue. It consists of 33 closed questions, which were developed, and clustered into four themes although, these themes were not identifiable to the respondents. Five open-ended questions were presented at the end of the questionnaire, and each dealing with a different theme. The questionnaire was designed with a structured approach and divided into two parts. Part A sought background information from each participant such as their gender, length of teaching experience and qualifications. Part B included the actual research questions. As noted previously, this part was based on four major themes. The first eleven items sought responses on the teachers' understanding of the inclusive education policy. Here, the intention was to identify the primary school teachers' understanding both in meaning and importance, of the inclusive education policy for educating children with special needs in regular schools and classrooms. In the second theme, the questionnaire

focused on the teachers' perceptions and experience in teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms. This theme had 10 items. The third theme was divided into two sub themes, the first section sought responses from the teachers on different areas of collaboration with colleagues in implementing the inclusive education policy. This section had 2 items. The second half of the third theme focused on some of the aspects that contributed towards effective implementation of the inclusive policy. This section had 7 items. Finally, responses were sought from teachers on general issues related to inclusive education policy. There were 4 questions on this fourth theme. From the researcher's perspective, answers to open-ended questions were to facilitate a more in depth insight into participants' views on inclusion.

A Five-Point Likert Scale Was used to assess the degree to which participants agreed with given statements. A Likert Scale according to Cohen et al., (2000), is a scale that measures the difference in the participants' thoughts in each of the questions. The scales are distributed fairly, usually given in a five-point range in order for the participants to respond according to their beliefs, opinions and thoughts. The scale response was categorised as follows; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = sometimes, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The respondents were asked to indicate their responses by placing a tick along this response scale. The scale represented various levels of understanding concerning the teachers' perceptions and experiences in teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms.

A covering letter (see Appendix 2) explaining the purpose of the research was addressed to the principals of the selected primary schools. This covering letter for the questionnaire was important as it explained the nature and significant of this research. The researcher was assisted by having transportation provided by the Provincial Education Office and was able to deliver the questionnaires to each school's principal personally. A careful explanation of the research was given to the principals and teachers who were to participate in it. As it happened during that period, all the primary schools in Enga Province were having provincial in-service training for a week and the researcher was granted permission by the in-service cluster coordinator to administer the questionnaire during one of the morning in-service sessions.



### **3.2 The Interview (See Appendix 5)**

An interview is intended to elicit descriptive and in-depth data from participants, who, in their own words, respond to questions posed by the interviewer (Cohen et al, 2000; Kumar, 1996). In this research interview, the aim was to obtain a clearer and fuller picture of the responses gathered from the questionnaire. The researcher wanted to venture deeper into the participants' responses on what they knew about the inclusive education policy and how they have experienced teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms. To this end, the researcher used a semi-structured interview design. The semi-structured interview involves having a series of structured questions but then it explores more deeply using open-ended questions to obtain additional information (Gall, 1996). For this study, 10 semi-structured interview questions were used in order to get more in-depth information related to the research topic. The researcher then probed using additional questions but these 'probes' differed somewhat from participant to participant. There are several reasons why semi structured interviews were used. First, the information gathered could triangulate, confirm or challenge the data from the questionnaire (Merriam, 1998). Second, the interview can complement and support the questionnaire results by exploring issues in more depth (Merriam, 1998). Third, the interview can investigate reasons for unexpected or unusual answers to the questionnaire. For instance, more information can be sought on why many research participants did not respond to some items. It can also provide grounds for analysis when the reliability of some data is in doubt (Merriam, 1998). Fourth, research participants can bring a fresh viewpoint to the topic under investigation (Merriam, 1998).

Interviews were conducted in two schools where all teachers had gathered together for the provincial in-service programme. Since the 12 selected teachers from those six schools were divided two different cluster groups for the in-service programme, the researcher travelled to these two schools. The principals of the host schools gave the researcher permission to conduct interviews in the schools and allocated an office to be used. The six teachers selected were chosen to give a gender balance, represent a range of qualifications held and the number of teaching experiences. Before the commencement of the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and obtained participant's approval to tape record the interviews. Each teacher's identity was kept confidential throughout the whole process of the interview

recording, transcribing and reporting. The interviews took approximately an hour and half for each teacher.

### **3.3 Preliminary data analysis**

A preliminary data analysis of the descriptive survey questions was undertaken prior to the interviews occurring. In analysing these responses, those that indicated 4 and 5 to each item were identified as being in a state of agreement, those that indicated 2 and 1 to each item were deemed to disagree, and a three indicated either an undecided position, or a 'sometimes' position. The additional information provided on the spaces below the questionnaire items were preliminarily analysed to inform areas to explore in the interviews.

## **4. Data Collection Procedure**

The procedures used to collect the data within the research settings is discussed below. These include the research settings, the selecting of samples, and the specific use of questionnaires and interview tools.

### **4.1 Research Setting**

The research was conducted in selected primary schools within Enga Province in Papua New Guinea. There are five districts in the province and the researcher selected two schools from each district to seek teacher participation from. Primary schools in Enga Province were chosen because the Special Education Programme had been introduced only very recently. Nonetheless, it was known to the researcher that there were teachers who had experienced teaching children with special needs and would therefore provide adequate information relevant to this study.

### **4.2 Research participants**

There are about 1,146 teachers teaching in the Enga province. They are distributed among four levels of education, teaching in different locations in the five districts. The primary level has 682 teachers, followed closely by the elementary level with 240 teachers. The secondary level has 173 teachers and the technical/vocational level only has 51 teachers (Department of Education, 2004). Among the 682 primary school teachers the researcher decided to choose 80 teachers to participate in the research

questionnaire. These 80 teachers were selected using staff data based on information from the provincial education office and represented one to two schools per district. The questionnaire was presented to the principals to select the teachers to participate and theoretically all teachers selected were 'required' to participate in the research questionnaire. The six primary schools selected, were based on levels. The primary school levels begin with level two which is made up of three – four teachers, level three schools have five – six teachers and the level four schools have seven - 13 teachers. The levels of the schools rise as the number of students grows. Three schools chosen were level four schools, and the other three were level three schools, The schools were also selected according to their geographical locations. Two schools were located in the centre of the provincial capital, another two schools were located along the main highway, and the final two schools were located off the main highway between three and four hours walk.

From the research group, 12 participants were further selected to participate in the interview. The selections were again done from within the six schools selected. The selections were made to obtain a gender, qualification and experiences balances. There were six male and six female participants and five certificate holders and seven diploma holders. Among these 12 participants one was a principal, two were deputy principals and two were senior teachers. The rest of the participants were junior level one teachers. All the 12 participants gave their consent to participate through out the interview (see Appendix 3).

The questionnaires took approximately 30 - 40 minutes to complete and the interview followed at least two days after the questionnaire. The researcher took between 60 and 90 minutes to interview each participant. The names of the schools selected for the research were withheld and a fictitious name was used instead throughout the study.

### **4.3 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data analysis was done both through the descriptive and interpretive approaches. The results from the quantitative data, which includes the 33 questions, were interpreted using a descriptive approach. The quantitative data collected from the field was analysed from the tables and the results were represented in percentages. These tables were used to determine the results of responses from each question item under

each of the four themes. The questionnaire items numbered in the tables refer to the actual questionnaire items provided during the research.

The analysing of the interviews was done using an interpretive approach and more in depth information was obtained. In the actual reporting of the responses maximum used has been made of the participants' words to preserve the integrity of their voices.

The use of initial against each direct quote represents the name of school and the teacher participant. For example, the initial 'T 1' stands for 'teacher one and 'S 1', 'school one'. The use of the 'junior' and 'senior' represents the number of years of experience a teacher has in teaching. A teacher teaching in the field for more than 15 years is classified as a 'senior teacher' while less than 15 years is classified as 'junior teacher'.

#### **4.4 Validity and Reliability**

In this study, the validity of the instruments used was determined in consulting with other with expertise in special and inclusive education, including the researcher's supervisor. In addition, the researcher has many years of personal and professional experience in this field in research setting. It was also believed that questionnaire and particularly the interview schedule were sufficiently flexible to allow teachers to respond in a way relevant to their own experience.

Reliability in dependent on the factors above but the cross-checking between responses from the questionnaire and the interviewee was seen as providing this check.

#### **4.5 Ethical Protocol**

As social research usually involves directly engaging with people, ethical aspects must always be a primary consideration. This present study was no exception and there were a number of ethical protocols the researcher had followed. First, the researcher was required to submit an ethics research application for ethical approval to the University of Waikato, School of Education Ethics Committee. The committee approved this application. Second, a similar ethical application was submitted to the Research and Monitoring Division within the National Department of Education,

Papua New Guinea and permission was granted by this department to conduct research in the country. Third, the researcher submitted an ethical application to the Division of Education in Enga Province and obtained the Assistant Secretary's approval to conduct research within the selected schools of the province (see Appendix 1).

#### **4.6 Informed Consent**

The recruitment of participants for research should always involve their complete understanding of the procedures employed, the risk involved and the demands that may be made upon them (Best & Kahn, 1993; Kumar, 1996). On obtaining the ethical approval from the Assistant Secretary of the Division of Education, the researcher approached each of the selected primary schools and explained to each principal the nature of the study, its purpose and the commitment required of the participating teachers (see Appendix 2). The researcher highlighted the importance of this study nationally in Papua New Guinea and the potential benefits from this study. It was important that the participants' consent was on a voluntary basis and without pressure of any kind. Before a potential made the decision whether or not to take part in the study, the researcher gave full description of the nature and purpose of the study and what their involvement meant. Every effort was made to ensure that the research did not pose any threat or harm professionally or personally to the participants. However, participants were advised verbally and in writing that they were free to withdraw, at any point to the commencement of the study.

#### **4.7 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

According to Cohen, et al., (2000), the maintaining of confidentiality and anonymity in social research is very important. In this research, the participants' identities were kept confidential for the entirety of the study. The researcher guaranteed to participants that he would keep all the information confidential. The essence of anonymity means the researcher should in no way reveal participants' identities and so pseudonyms were used instead of actual names during the collection, transcribing, analysis and reporting of the data.

#### **4.8 Other Ethical concerns relevant to the Research**

Although there could be some concerns that this research was evaluating the progress of the Inclusive Policy in reality, it was dedicated to finding ways of improving the effectiveness of practice related to the policy. This research was not concerned with critiquing the policy per se. As policy makers and implementers, everyone is committed to make this programme work for people with disabilities, who previously have had less opportunity to be educated and find employment. Although the results of the research could be different for other provinces the researcher felt the findings would be sufficiently representative to be generalised to other parts of the country. However, it is recognised that such broader generalising must be done with caution.

#### **4.9 Problems encountered while collecting the Data.**

While the research was carried out in Enga Province, the researcher encountered a chain of problems to do with data collection. First, the dates scheduled for data collection by the researcher were not convenient for some schools, which made it difficult for the researcher to deliver the research questionnaire. The dates were scheduled for the second last week of the third term. The 30<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary of Papua New Guinea also took place in the last week of the term break and occupied the entire week. The Provincial In-service Week was the week before the Independence celebration, during the first week of the school holiday. This made it difficult for the researcher to collect the completed questionnaires from the principals as well as having the 12 selected teachers participate in the interview in that week also. Second, the transport allocated to the researcher for use during the study was not available for the period scheduled for the collection of the completed questionnaires from the school principals and the conducting of the interviews. This made it difficult for the researcher to collect the questionnaires and conduct interviews at schools. However, the researcher found alternatives ways to collect the completed questionnaires from the principals and complete the interview.

Further difficulties occurred in the process of collecting the interview data. Most teachers had not been involved in any research and were reluctant to take part at first. However, when clear explanations of the purpose of the study were given, 12 teachers volunteered to participate. Most interviewees used both Pidgin and English to respond to questions, making it difficult to translate when transcribing the interview data.

## 5. Summary

The approach to the research is outlined in this chapter. Essentially, this is a mix of both quantitative and the qualitative data. The quantitative approach involved the use of research questionnaires as the means of data collection while the qualitative approach involved the use of semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth information from the research participants. The 77 research participants were from six selected primary schools in five districts of the Enga Province. The selections were made to obtain a gender, qualification and experience balance.

The ethical procedures from various authorities were followed including obligations to research participants, before the actual research was undertaken. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the research process and problems encountered during the research were also noted.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter the results of the study are presented and discussed. These are presented by themes and both the results and the discussions are included under each theme heading. The four themes are: the teachers' knowledge and understanding on the Inclusive Education Policy which is in place in Papua New Guinea; the teachers' perceptions and experiences in teaching children with special needs; the support received from the Government to implement the policy effectively and, finally some general issues related to inclusive education which may impact a its implementation.

#### **Theme 1: Primary School Teachers' attitudes, knowledge and understanding of the Inclusive Education Policy**

Twelve items on the questionnaire related directly to teachers' knowledge and understanding of the inclusive Policy. The response to these items are summarised in table 1.

**Table 1. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of Inclusive Education Policy**

Quest No	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Some times	%	No response	%
1	63	82%	11	14%	2	3%	1	1%
2	62	81%	11	14%	3	4%	1	1%
3	44	58%	14	18%	15	19%	4	5%
4	50	65%	7	9%	17	22%	3	4%
5	23	30%	28	36%	22	29%	4	5%
6	20	26%	41	53%	13	17%	3	4%
7	35	45%	18	23%	20	26%	4	5%
8	57	74%	7	9%	9	12%	4	5%
9	62	81%	5	6%	6	8%	4	5%
10	45	58%	16	21%	8	10%	8	10%
11	58	76%	7	9%	8	10%	4	5%

#### **Q1. All children have a right to formal education in a regular school**

Of the 77 questionnaire respondents, 82 % felt that all children, whether they have disabilities or not, have the right to formal education in regular schools. Additional



explanations obtained from the comments made by teachers in the interview that confirmed this response. All of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of the Inclusive Education Policy as well as other policies, which emphasise providing equal educational opportunities for all children. One junior female teacher commented, “The Philosophy of Education in Papua New Guinea strongly emphasises that every child has the right to formal education so we teachers should not be neglecting children whether they are disabled or not but provide the educational opportunities for them” (T2, S1). A senior female teacher reiterated the same sentiment:

Yes, I strongly believe that all the children should have the right for formal education in this country. Whether these kids are from the remote parts of the country or in the cities they must be enrolled into schools. The problem is we teachers don't like to take up our postings in the remote schools so many children there can't have the privilege of getting a good education. (T2, S4)

Another junior female teacher, while supporting inclusion, identified an important reason that can be a barrier to this occurring:

I want every child in this province to get a proper education so that they develop this country to become like those developed countries but only if we stop this tribal fighting taking place. Tribal fighting destroys the schools and teachers are afraid to teach. That's where many kids don't get proper education. If we stop the tribal fights and concentrate in educating our children, these children can get proper education and become further leaders of the country. (T2, S5)

Further support was also provided by eleven respondents in the comments made to the open-ended questions. Four teachers stated that every citizen has the right to be educated while the other seven stated that every child should be warmly accepted into a school without any restrictions because of his or her disability.

While all 12 interviewees supported the idea that all children should have access to formal education in a regular school, of the 77 questionnaire respondents 14% did not agree with this statement. The other 3% of the respondents were undecided about the child's rights to education and placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category.

**Q2. Every child has the right to formal education in a regular classroom**

From the questionnaire item, 81% of the teachers showed support for the principle that all children have the right to have formal education in the regular classrooms. In the interview all teachers were able to elaborate on this response. One female teacher, and deputy principal responded, “Yes every child has all the right to be sitting inside the classroom to learn unless the school is closed for some reasons” (T1, S6). Another senior female teacher, who supported the statement, said that many teachers were too selective in choosing children to be in their classes:

We teachers should not be too selective on which child should be in our class. Most times we like to avoid children who are dull in their academic work or children with behaviour problems because these children give us more headaches regarding assisting them in the school work or are difficult to control. As teachers we must accept every child that sits inside the classroom. If they have academic or social problems, we should be the ones assisting them to find solutions in order to remedy their problems. (T2, S3)

Thus, the majority of teachers support the Inclusive Education Policy and strongly emphasises on avoiding discrimination at costs in learning institutions. However, 14% of the questionnaire respondents disagreed with the statement that every child has the right to formal education, 4% were unsure and used the ‘sometimes’ category.

**Q3. Children with special needs need to be fully integrated into regular classrooms**

Just over half (58%) of the questionnaire respondents supported the view that children with special needs should be fully integrated into regular classrooms with children without disabilities. This position was elaborate by three teachers who provided additional comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire stating that all children should be treated the same in the classroom whether they had disabilities or not. More than half of the teachers (7) who were interviewed also supported full integration. One junior female teacher commented that:

Children with disabilities are just like other children but have some problems with their body parts that make them look different from normal children. However, if

these children want to come to school and are eager to learn, we must not stop their rights but accept them into the classroom. I know these children might give us additional workload yet on the other hand the education that we invest in them may one day make them become someone recognised in the community or our town, even the country as a whole. (T2, S6)

Eighteen percent of the questionnaire respondents did not support the statement, indicating that children with special needs could not be fully integrated into regular classrooms. Nine teachers who responded to the open-ended question said that they thought some children with disabilities could not be fully integrated into regular classrooms. A small number of teachers (4), who were interviewed, mainly with certificate holders, expressed their concerns about accepting some children with disabilities into their classrooms. One senior male teacher expressed his concerns as follows:

I for one, think that the concept of including children who are physically disabled into the classroom is the dumbest idea. How can we look after a child in the classroom when communication will be a problem? Who will bring him or her to the toilet when the child needs to go or bring the child to and from school every day? People who made up this policy must be out of their mind. We are supposed to teach and not to take care of a disabled child at the same time. I don't like the idea of including children who are disabled into my classroom and definitely won't accept one if told too! (T2, S2)

The issue of including children with special needs in the classrooms also raised some concerns from the respondents. Nineteen percent commented that not all children with special needs could be included into regular classrooms. Although the Inclusive Education Policy stipulates that all children with disabilities are entitled to formal education, these teachers thought certain children with disabilities should be enrolled and educated with other children without disabilities, while others could be sent to special schools where specialists could assist them. For instance, one of the junior male respondents made this response.

I support this programme called inclusive education. This is a real benefit for all children that we see and think are disabled. Yes there many different types of

disabilities. Some of the disabilities are easy for us to handle. However, others are too difficult, so not all children with disabilities would be considered. In my opinion, I prefer to have children whose disabilities are easy to cater for. For example, children with physically disabilities or half blind and half deaf should be enrolled in school. I don't want a child with many disabilities in my classroom. It would be too difficult for me... (T1, S1)

**Q4. Some types of special needs are impossible to cater for in regular classrooms**

This statement emphasised that although many children with special needs could be included into regular classrooms, there should be some selection criteria determining what type and degree of disability lends itself better to an inclusive environment and what type and degree of disability is better accommodated in a segregated setting.

Two thirds (65%) of the questionnaire respondents agreed that some children with special needs would adjust well to regular classrooms but not all disabilities were appropriate to include. In line with those results, Five sixths of the teachers (10) who were interviewed stressed the importance of educating children whose disabilities are easy to cater for, in the regular classroom. One senior male teacher who supported this statement made the following comments:

The inclusive education idea is new to me but from what I understand through your explanation I strongly think we should not have all the disabled children in our classrooms to teach. A totally blind child is hard for me to help. I can communicate with the child but how will he or she see how I demonstrate my explanation in the classroom. I believe this child needs to have special machines to help him or her write with and I don't have any idea what and how these machines work. Such children can stay back in the village or parents can find a special school for blind children to let those trained people teach them. (T2, S2)

However, when further asked if children with learning difficulties or mild disabilities could be taught in regular classrooms, the same teacher responded more positively:

I have been teaching so many children with learning difficulties and can handle them easily even though there is much work to be done to provide assistance in their

academic work... some children with only one eye or half of the leg is small and use crutches are easy to teach. Children who are partly deaf are also easy. Actually I have taught a few children who have hearing problems and those children using crutches. (T2, S2)

Nine percent of the respondents were against the idea of having only some disabilities integrated into the regular classrooms. The other 17% of the respondents were undecided and placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category. Only two interviewees expressed their views that all children with disabilities should be enrolled in special education centres, while 4% of the respondents made no response.

**Q5. Most children with physical disabilities can be taught in regular classrooms**

The question of having children with 'physical' disabilities taught in regular classrooms attracted relatively equal responses across the Likert range scale.

Thirty percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that children with physical disabilities should be enrolled into regular classrooms. In the extended interview, when teachers were asked why such children could easily be taught, one teacher's response summarised up the views of many (6) in the group. This junior female teacher maintained that, "even though a child is disabled physically, he or she can communicate because of good sight and hearing ability and the ability to use his or her hands to write" (T2, S6). Another female teacher and deputy principal remarked, "Yes there are some. For instance there is a grade seven girl who has big scars all over her face and hands however she is a very bright student. She cannot participate in sports but is very good in math" (T2, S4).

Approximately a third (36%) of the respondents opposed enrolling children with physical disabilities into regular classrooms. This was also the view of one third (4) of the teachers interviewed. One junior male teacher commented:

I personally taught a 24 years old female student in grade six for the first four weeks and decided to tell the parents to withdraw their daughter from the regular school and have her back in the special resource centre where she was before. This was because

it was a rural school and did not have proper toilet facilities for the girl. We were using pit toilets and it was too difficult for her and her aide to use. The classroom doors were too small and narrow for the wheel chairs to go in, so normally we had to carry the girl in then fold the wheelchair to take it into the classroom and the school does not have concrete pathways that would make it easy for the wheelchair to move. So to me, I have experienced it so would not accept children on wheelchairs into my classroom. (T1, S2)

One third (29%) of the responses who placed themselves in the 'sometimes' or no response categories could be seen to hold the view that not all children with physical disabilities could be enrolled in regular schools. Some of these teachers who were interviewed were of the opinion that only children with mild physical disabilities should attend the regular schools and those with severe physical disabilities should attend special education schools. One senior male interviewee a deputy principal remarked:

Children who can use walking sticks or crutches to walk to schools are accepted... those children, who use wheelchairs with the legs being paralysed could enrol, providing that they live close to the school and someone, can help push them to school and back. (T1, S6)

Another female teacher, also a deputy principal, thought that there should be a separate classroom in the school for children with physical disabilities. In her interview she stated, "Yes provided that there must be a system in place where schools should accommodate these children either in the same class or at the school but in a different building" (T2, S4).

**Q6. Most children with intellectual disabilities can be taught in regular classrooms**

When teachers were questioned if most children with 'intellectual' disabilities could be taught in regular schools, one quarter of the questionnaire respondents (26%) stated that they supported children with intellectual disabilities being included in the regular classroom. However, more than half of the questionnaire respondents (53%) were against the idea of including then children in regular classrooms. Most

interviewees (10) did not support full inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. One senior male teacher interviewed stated that:

These children with intellectual disabilities would learn nothing and at the same time other children would be scared to associate with the child. They will waste my time to teach them... simply tell the parents not to bring them to school. Maybe the parents are out of their mind to bring such children with intellectual disabilities to be enrolled in the school for the teachers to teach them. (T 2, S2)

One principal commented:

It's against our culture to expose such children in public; especially in schools where all the children will see this child as intellectually disabled. It's OK for the child to stay in the village and the community will look after him but not in public like the schools. Other people would have negative perceptions on the family and the entire village. (T1, S5)

Those (17%) who responded 'sometimes' to this statement on the questionnaire may have been indirectly that they felt some children with intellectual disabilities could be taught in regular classrooms. However, it is conceded that 'sometimes' could also refer to the context or the teacher being the critical factor. Two teachers interviewed felt that some children with intellectual disabilities can be taught in regular classrooms. One senior female interviewee stated her reasons:

Well those who can perform in class will be accepted but I don't know whether teachers will be happy to teach them because it's totally stupid to enrol a child who doesn't even know how to write ABC... properly or his own name. Well it's up to the teachers to decide. I will only teach children who will be able to read and write a little bit. (21, S3)

#### **Q7. The policy of inclusion is fine in theory but does not work in practice**

In response to this questionnaire statement, 45% of the teachers indicated that inclusive education would not work in practice even though there are policies written for them to follow. One third of the interviewees were also of this opinion. One senior male teacher with a certificate in teaching commented:

To be honest, I don't know how I can teach a blind student or a student with physical or multiple disabilities and in a wheel chair, so this policy can't work for primary schools... its okay for these children to go to a special school. (T2, S2)

A junior female teacher and diploma holder stated that although she took special education courses as a core subject at the college, she did not bother to put into practice what she learned and explained her reasons:

I blamed the Division of Education for not taking the initiative to emphasise the importance of the Inclusive Policy and its implementation progress at the classrooms or schools level. What are the Primary School inspectors doing in schools when carrying out inspections? They are representing the Department of Education and should emphasise the importance of the policy to teachers and parents at the schools level. (T2, S5)

When asked why she did not want to use her knowledge to implement the policy, she replied, "I was scared to introduce this concept to those teachers who have many years of teaching experience and at the same time Department of Education did not carry out awareness on the importance of inclusive education so I did not bother to."

However, 23% of the questionnaire respondents thought that inclusive education would work well in practice and disagreed with the statement provided. Two respondents provided extra comments in the open-ended questions stated that the policy has been neglected for so long and needs to be emphasised, supported and implemented. Many (7) interviewees also supported the opinion. One senior female teacher who was a certificate holder commented, "I have been teaching some disabled children however inclusive education policy is new for us to understand" (T2, S3). Another junior male teacher provided qualified support for inclusion:

I feel sorry for these children with special needs and this policy is good for them but to put it into practice the government must increase our salaries, provide enough teaching and curriculum materials and schools must build good classrooms so we can have these disabled children in the schools. (T1, S4)



The researcher enquired if they had experienced teaching children with special needs such as learning difficulties, emotional and behaviour difficulties, physical disabilities, partially hearing and visual impairments and cerebral palsy in the classroom? They all responded positively. One of the senior female teachers made this comment, “When you explained clearly the importance of the inclusive education policy I understood the concept but before no... even now I am teaching these children, I did not know the policy but was teaching these disabled children” (T2, S3).

Twenty-six percent of the questionnaire respondents placed themselves in the ‘sometimes’ category. Again, it is difficult to really know what the ‘sometimes’ response really indicated, however, the interviews did offer some possible reasons for this response. For example, a deputy principal who was interviewed stated, “I am not sure whether inclusive education would work or not... I think it can work if teachers are willing to teach disabled children in their class... I have not taught a disabled child so I have not experience of it” (T1, S6).

**Q8. The most appropriate learning setting for children with special needs is in the Special Education Resource Centres.**

Three quarters (74%) of the questionnaire respondents favoured having children with special needs being taught in Special Educational Resource Centres. Eight of the respondents expanded on their reasons for holding this position in the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Six of the interview respondents also expressed initial agreement with this statement. Because this seemed to contradict earlier responses, where inclusion was supported, the researcher probed to try and understand this perceived contradiction. When the researcher asked the reasons for this view, the interviewees stated that they do not have the proper training, good teaching resources and special equipment to support their teaching in the regular classroom whereas the Special Education Centres teachers have this training background and equipment. For instance a junior male teacher was emphatic in stating:

Children who cannot see and hear, have an intellectual disability or sit in wheel chairs should not be taught by the teachers at the schools. They should be enrolled in the special education centre. The specialist teachers can teach them and provide medicine for them. (T1, S2)

Nine percent of the questionnaire respondents did not support that children with special needs in the Special Education Resource Centres. Few (three) of the interviewees said that they wanted children with special needs to be educated in regular classroom. A senior female deputy principal provided the following rationale:

I have been teaching a few children with disabilities during my teaching career and have seen how these children make good friends with other children in the classrooms. They all helped one another in their schoolwork and played well together. They even share lunch together. (T2, S4)

It was interesting to note that 12% of the questionnaire respondents fall into the 'sometimes' category. As noted earlier it is almost impossible to determine what a 'sometimes' response may mean. However, pursuing these items in the interview few teachers (3) did offer some possible insights. For example, one of the junior female teachers stated, "Children with mild disabilities are easy to cater for in the classrooms but children with moderate and severe disabilities, we cannot teach them and they should be send to special education centres for them to learn" (T2, S6). Another junior male teacher said, "We must teach children with disabilities in our classrooms, however, children with complicated disabilities should be referred to special education schools where they could learn well. The other disabled children who are easy to handle, we will teach them" (T1, S2). There is no doubt that these teachers consider that special education resource centres have adequate resources and specialists that enable children with special needs to gain a more effective education.

**Q9. Every primary school should have a policy for children with special needs.**

The statement of having a school policy written to cater for children with special needs was strongly supported by 81% of the questionnaire respondents. This statement was supported by all the interviewees. When these teachers were asked if the schools they were teaching in had written policies to cater for children with disabilities, the answer was 'no' from all 12 interviewees. One of the deputy principals strongly recommended that all schools should develop school policies consistent with the international Inclusive Education Policy (Salamanca). He admitted

that he was not aware of the national Inclusive Education Policy or of its importance. Another principal commented:

We must have a school policy written for these disabled children. I have enrolled children with disabilities into the schools but we don't have any policy for them to stay in the school. I just treat them as normal children. I never knew about the inclusive education policy. However, I took the initiative to encourage a few disabled children to continue on coming to school by awarding them prizes at the end of the school year. This was also to encourage other parents to send their children who were disabled to school. But I would definitely tell the Board of Management of the school to develop a school policy. (T1, S5)

A female junior teacher blamed the lack of knowledge about the policy on the Department of Education:

Yes, we should definitely have a school policy for children with special needs to look after them ... The schools do not have the policies written because of the lack of awareness from the Department of Education. How can the board of management members, headmasters and these teachers with certificate and who have been teaching in the field for more than 20 years know about this type of policy? The policy makers and administrators up at the Provincial and National headquarters have to tell us of such important policy. There was no awareness as long as I have been teaching about this policy. If they tell us, then schools will definitely have this policy in place. So I blame the policy makers for their failures to let us know of the importance of the inclusive policy. (T2, S1)

A deputy principal stated that they do not have any school policy to cater for children with special needs however, she did keep records of children with disabilities who were enrolled in school. She commented, "No policy was written in this school. The Inclusive Education Policy is a new idea/concept to me but we have records for children with special needs" (T2, S4).

A further interview question asked if the school administration had delegated a teacher to be responsible for children with special needs. All interviewees responded negatively indicating that their schools have never delegated a teacher to be

responsible for children with special needs. When asked if a teacher should be delegated this responsibility all the interviewees were in favour. One male senior teacher interviewed responded, “Yes, it should be. I think the headmaster does not know fully about this policy. So it’s good to have a trained person on special education to help these children” (T2, S2). A senior female teacher agreed and provided this response, “Yes, we should delegate a staff member to be responsible for all the children with special needs, so if any problems arise the teacher can step in and help them” (T2, S4).

Only 6% of the respondents opposed the idea of having a school policy on inclusive education. Of the teachers who made up the 8% in the ‘sometimes’ category, there were more male teachers than female teachers. One could speculate that these teachers neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The respondents, who gave no answer, again made up 5% of the total number.

**Q10. I have little knowledge about inclusive education policy**

More than half (58%) of the questionnaire respondents agreed that they knew very little about the Inclusive Education Policy. Although overall diploma holders appeared to have a slightly better understanding of the Inclusive Education Policy than certificate holders, this was not always the case. For example, a male teacher who graduated with a diploma felt largely ignorant on this topic generally:

I took a special education course at the college in 1997 for only half the semester because the lecturer who coordinated and taught the course was trained in Maths/Science and knew very little about special education. He was the only lecturer who took the second year students but did not teach the course well. He normally brings a community rehabilitation officer to teach us but this officer did not have the teaching material and does not teach well ... like know the content ... The first year I did not take it because there were no trained and specialist lecturers for that course. So I don’t know much about how to teach disabled children in the class. I don’t know what to do or say if a disabled child is enrolled into my class. (T1, S3)

In a similar vein, this was how a certificate holder male teacher when interviewed interpreted the meaning of special education and inclusive education.

I don't know the meaning of this study. Is this a special project for teachers or something to do with education that you are conducting this research for? ... Well, in my 22 years of teaching I have never heard from the Department of Education that special education one of the services provided by the department. This is the first time I have heard of the inclusive education policy. I can now understand what it means by educating disabled children in schools from your explanations... I have not seen any circular from the Department of Education emphasising the importance of this policy. However, I have taught children who were half blind, had hearing problems, and used crutches in the schools. (T2, S2)

Another male certificate teacher blamed the diploma holders for not providing staff professional development at the school. In his view,

The teachers who graduated with a diploma at the teachers colleges or in-service colleges know more about the inclusive education programme. They should conduct in-services on these new ideas they have learned and train us... Some of us don't know the changes taking places in the education system but they come straight from colleges and should know many things so they have to teach us... not just hiding their knowledge. (T1, S6)

Those 12 teachers who completed the open-ended section of the questionnaire mentioned that Government should plan well and have this policy effectively implemented in the schools so that teachers would know the importance of the policy.

Twenty-one percent of the questionnaire respondents understood what the Inclusive Education Policy is. As noted previously, this group were more likely to hold a diploma in teaching. When these teachers were interviewed, they elaborated on what inclusive education was to them and the importance of it, however they considered that the implementation of the policy was a barrier. One junior female teacher who had taken a special education course at teachers college expressed her concerns in this manner:

Special education was my subject of interest and I would like to teach and assist children with special needs to have equal access to formal education and employment opportunities. However, to put it into practice in the teaching field was a problem. I tried to introduce this concept in the school I taught at but got negative criticism from my colleagues so I didn't bother to implement it ... I have tried developing the Individual Education Plan for a few children with learning difficulties, however gave up when I sensed that no one would encourage me. Up till now its six years and I have forgotten all about implementing the inclusive education policy. (T1, S4)

Seven respondents, who provided extra comments in the open-ended questions in the survey questionnaire, indicated that the Department of Education should emphasise the importance of the Inclusive Education Policy so that teachers would know about the policy and be able to implement it effectively in the schools.

Only 10% of the respondents indicated 'sometimes' and again it is uncertain what this actually indicates.

**Q11. Inclusion is a change in minds and attitudes of teachers rather than just a policy change.**

This statement was supported by three quarters (76%) of the respondents to the questionnaire. An analysis of what the questionnaire respondents wrote in response to the five open-ended questionnaires indicated that 72 respondents made comments relating to teacher attitudes. While 7 teachers interviewed, were in support of the opinion that a change in minds and attitudes of teachers was essential for implementing the policy. The comment of one of a senior male teacher illustrates this:

I totally need to change my attitude towards teaching children with special needs because when I lose my temper especially to very slow learners I label and call that child "stupid or dumb" or sometimes tell the child not to waste my time on him/her. I don't feel like assisting a child with learning difficulties ... Most times I ignore the child and don't like to correct his/her schoolwork ... just a waste of time ... I totally ignore the child and don't bother telling him/her to participate. All these were bad attitudes that I have developed and need to change. (T2, S2)

A similar sentiment was expressed by a senior female teacher who taught in one of the rural primary schools:

I don't spend time on such stupid lousy kids who can't perform in the classroom ... When I see that I can't cope up with a kid, I punish the child. For example if a girl makes mistakes again in the timetables, I punish her to work for me, like telling her to go and break firewood for me in the nearby bush. Those dull and dumb children, I don't help them in their schoolwork much. But I keep them in the classroom so that every Monday they bring me sweet potatoes and vegetables and Thursdays for firewood. If I tell them to withdraw from school, I will have less enrolment and won't get enough food and firewood supplies. (T2, S3)

A female teacher who was a deputy principal also suggested that teachers should start to develop positive attitudes and teach children with special needs because in the near future they would have children with AIDS in their classrooms:

Teachers should have a positive and caring attitude to educate those children. In a few years time we might have children who are HIV positive. Teachers will be scared to have these children in their classroom. Therefore they have to be positive in teaching these children with special needs. (T2, S4)

Nine percent of the questionnaire respondents felt that they already had a positive attitude towards teaching children with special needs. Four interviewees were supportive of this opinion. One junior male teacher when interviewed stated, "I think teachers are trained to cater for all groups of children so I don't see any reason we should chase these disabled children out of the classrooms or schools or have negative attitudes towards them" (T1, S1).

The other 10% fall into the 'sometimes' category. One junior female interviewee when asked if she held negative attitudes towards children with disabilities, she replied, "Sometimes, but only when I teach the class a topic and these disabled children can't catch up quickly. I totally lose my temper and ignore them, sometimes I use words like you dumb kid but it's not all the time" (T1, S4).

## **Discussion**

### ***Theme 1: Understanding the concept of Inclusion***

According to Inclusion International (1998), inclusion means providing equal educational opportunities for all children in regular schools, regardless of their disabilities or differences. This means children with different types of disabilities should have equal access to nearby schools like children without disabilities. The philosophy of inclusive education is also supported by some international legislation and several policies. The Salamanca Framework is the main policy emphasising the importance of inclusive education internationally. Other supportive policy documents include the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasises the necessity for providing equal opportunities for children with disabilities, and the 1990 Declaration on Education for All, which stated that there should be equal access to education for every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the educational system (Inclusion International, 1998). The Philosophy of Education document in Papua New Guinea also emphasises equal participation for all children in educational opportunities (Department of Education, 1986).

#### **1.1 The rights to formal education**

The importance of giving all children access to formal education was overwhelmingly supported by 82% of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire. Most of the respondents said that children should have the right to formal education in regular schools, regardless of their gender, disability etc. This means children in the rural schools should have the same right to formal education as those in urban schools and girls should have equal rights to boys, to access formal education. These teachers believed that children with some form of disability should also have an equal right to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers in regular schools. The respondents also recognised the importance of the Inclusive Education Policy as well as the other national and international legislations that emphasise equal rights for all children to formal education. This finding is consistent with a study undertaken in Uganda by Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen (2003) which found that 79% of the 119 teachers involved, believed that all children regardless of their disabilities or genders have the right to formal education in regular schools because the government of



Uganda regarded education was a basic human right for all the citizens. While there are significant between Papua New Guinea and Uganda this study does provide reasonable cross-cultural comparisons.

However, some teachers who raised some issues here commented that the rights of the children to gain formal and quality education were often denied. First, tribal fighting can impede most children in Enga from receiving a proper education. Tribal fighting normally involves two or more tribes fighting against each other on issues related to land ownerships, or other social issues, such as marriages problems, brawls from consumption of alcohol, etc. When there is tribal fighting schools are closed down, school children and teachers leave the schools for safety reasons. Sometimes tribal fights last for more than a year and this really affects the education of the children. A teacher who was interviewed stated, "If we stop fighting and concentrate on educating our children, these children would get proper education and some would become future leaders of the country." As Thomas and Vaughan, (2004) stated, the purpose of inclusive education is to value every child as equal for formal education so that they can participate more meaningfully in society during their adult life. However, if tribal fights continue, children will be deprived of their rights to education.

Second, it is apparent that some teachers are reluctant to take up teaching positions in primary schools in rural areas and places where there is always tribal fighting. There is some evidence that sometimes teachers take up teaching postings yet do not actually spend much time at the school. This would seem to be an attitude problem and one that would need addressing so children can have the opportunity access to formal education.

Third, some teachers who teach in schools located in urban centres and cities undertake class selections and transfer children from one class to another without the approval of the school administration. Although the practice does not occur frequently, a few teachers do it, especially when dealing with children who have behaviour problems or intellectual disabilities. If a class teacher has not been able to manage a child's emotional and behaviour problem for an academic year, she does not want to take that class again the following year. If the teacher were allocated the same class, then he or she may transfer the pupil with special needs to another class of

the same grade. This is against the policies of ‘inclusive education and education for all’, which strongly oppose discrimination and the segregation of children. Children with special needs should be treated as equal as their non-disabled peers without any form of discrimination in the school environment (Smith et al., 2004).

## **1.2 Including children with certain types of disabilities**

People have many different types of disabilities. They include sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. Research into inclusion of children with one of these types of disability into the regular classroom as to be investigated whether these children have gained academic and social benefits. According to Connelly’s (2004) study in New Zealand, the majority of the teachers felt that students with severe disabilities should not be included into regular classroom. These include children with intellectual disabilities and autism. However, children with physical and academic disabilities should be accepted into regular classrooms. Another study in Zimbabwe, revealed that 94% of the teachers were not happy to have blind children in their classrooms and that they were not prepared to teach them (Mushoriwa, 2001).

Similar responses were received from the participants in this study. The inclusion of children with certain types of disability into the regular classroom was well supported by the more than half (65%) of the questionnaire respondents. These respondents felt that only some types of disability were possible to cater for in the regular classroom. Though the majority of the teachers supported the Inclusion Education Policy, they were only prepared to teach children with disabilities that were easy to manage. These included children with mild disabilities, those who are partially impaired visually or have hearing impaired, children with cerebral palsy, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and learning difficulties. Teachers also commented that children with disabilities who have good communication skills are more manageable and make it easier for teachers and peers to provide academic assistance.

Most teachers were against in providing academic support for children with moderate and severe disabilities, or with hearing and visual impairments, in regular schools, because of the lack of proper teacher training, the lack of proper learning facilities and appropriate learning materials to support their teaching. Similar results were also

indicated by studies in Uganda (Kristensen, Omagor-Loican & Onen 2003) and Zimbabwe (Mushoriwa, 2001)

Thirty percent of teachers felt that children with physical disabilities could be taught in regular classroom but 36% of the questionnaire respondents opposed it. Those teachers who supported the inclusion of children with physical disabilities had previously experienced teaching one or two children with physical disabilities. Among the interviewees, a female teacher stressed that if the children had good eyesight and hearing ability there was no reason why they should not come to school. She also thought that children who were able to use walking sticks or crutches to support them would be accepted in the school. Her views reflected the opinion of many teachers.

Many teachers said that they would accept children with physical disabilities in their classrooms, however some barriers would deny these children's right to formal education. The first identified barrier is the location of the schools in relation to children's villages. Many schools in rural areas are situated in locations which would make it difficult for children in wheelchairs or who have walking sticks to move from home to school.

Second, the facilities in the majority of schools would not accommodate children with physical disabilities. For example, a female teacher who taught a female student with physical disability expressed how difficult it was for the student to use the toilet facilities. There was no proper concrete footpath for her to move her wheelchair around and the classroom facilities would not accommodate her easily. The door was too narrow for the wheelchair to go in and out of the classroom.

The inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities into regular classroom received less support from the respondents (26%). Almost half of the respondents (53%) felt that children with intellectual disabilities would not perform well academically and would waste teachers' time in providing an education for them.

The other significant issue mentioned by many teachers, was that it was against Engan cultural practice to expose a person with an intellectual disability to public settings,

like a learning institution. Schools do not enrol children with intellectual disabilities and this exclusion can range from mild to severe intellectual disabilities. Culturally, few teachers said that it is considered shameful for the family and relatives to bring such children to be enrolled in schools and society would have a negative perception of parents of the child and the tribe he/she belongs to. The belief is that such children should be catered for at home rather than in schools.

### **1.3 The appropriate learning place**

Almost three quarters (74%) of the questionnaire respondents considered that the most appropriate learning place for children with special needs were Special Education Centres. A following question, asked whether children with special needs benefited more academically from regular classrooms than in a Special Education Centre. This received a lower response. Only 21% agreed that children with special needs learnt more in special education centres while 25% of the respondents felt the appropriate learning place was the regular classrooms.

The response probably reflected a perception that in special education centres, the teaching facilities and support staffs were better able to meet the needs of the children. Teachers and specialists have the experiences to teach and assist children with special needs to perform academically. While this may appear to contradict early responses, which indicated a support for inclusion, the preference teachers now expressed for educating children with special needs in resources centres, and not regular classrooms, was about the 'reality' of the situation. It possibly reflects the difference between agreeing with something in principle, but also know the reality of being able to deliver on that principle.

However, some teachers suggested that only children with severe and multiple disabilities should be taught at special education centres while those children with mild disabilities can still be taught in the regular classrooms. A few teachers said they were teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms and would like to encourage others to do the same. This possibly means that not all disabilities are easy to be catered for in regular class settings.

#### **1.4. Understanding the Inclusive Education Policy**

This study clearly indicated that most teachers who graduated with certificate in teaching did not understand the concept of inclusion. More than half (58%) of the questionnaire respondents from the survey questions and almost three quarters (9) of the interviewees agreed that they knew very little or nothing about the Inclusive Policy. They indicated that they did not know what the Inclusive Education Programme was nor how they could teach children with special needs. They only learnt about the concept of inclusive education when the researcher explained it to them. One teacher thought it was a 'borrowed' policy from other developed countries to be experimented with in this country. After participating in the study many teachers changed their perceptions about inclusive education and supported the policy. In fact these teachers were already including children with special needs in their classrooms but the policy itself had never been introduced to them and so they thought it was something new. Through this study some reasons for this lack of knowledge have emerged.

First, teachers with certificates in teaching had not taken any courses in special education and therefore felt they were incapable of teaching children with special needs in regular schools. Courses on special education were not offered in almost all the teachers colleges. Few training programmes were available for teachers to help children with special needs. For example, a senior female teacher when interviewed stated that she had never known about the Inclusive Education Policy or the Special Education Programme because this course was not taught in teachers' colleges. She was trained for first aid courses only. This comment would appear to indicate that the Department of Education has given low priority to providing education for children with special needs in the country. As Conway (2005) stressed, it is important to train teachers in the field of special education so they can have the knowledge and skills to teach children with special needs. However, teachers' colleges have not developed special education courses about how to teach these students. Therefore, teachers knew either nothing or very little about what special education is.

It was quite interesting to note also that majority of the teachers with a diploma in teaching also stated that they knew very little about neither special education nor the importance of implementing the Inclusive Education Policy in regular schools.

According to the 1991 National Department of Education Sector Study's recommendation, special education courses should be taught in all teachers colleges. A special education position was created and funded in each teachers' college so that colleges could appoint lecturers specialising in special education to teach pre-service teachers (Department of Education, 1993). The courses were offered from the colleges at the beginning of 1994 but this study identified two major reasons why teachers who were trained subsequent to this initiative still lack knowledge in this area.

The first problem was that colleges did not have properly trained special education lecturers to develop special education courses and teach the pre-service teachers. Those lecturers who were appointed to the special education positions either only had basic training in the area of special education or were untrained, but still expected to teach the courses. A female teacher mentioned during the interview that she did not get proper training in special education because a lecturer with a different subject speciality was appointed to coordinate and teach the special education course. Though the Department of Education was clearly trying to implement the special education policy, by introducing and funding the special education positions at the teacher's colleges, plans to send potential teachers and lecturers overseas for further training in the area of special education did not happen.

Second, it is apparent that the Department of Education did not have sufficient financial resources to assist potential lecturers to study abroad. The negotiation between the Department of Education and donor funding agencies such as Australian Aid (AUSAID) and the New Zealand Aid (NZ AID) to fund potential teachers in areas within special education may have taken place. However, teachers and lecturers upon completion of their studies might have either been offered a different employment, or quit teaching. To rectify this situation it would seem appropriate for the National Department of Education to develop a long – term strategic plan in the area of special education where a systematic and coordinate approach would result in more expedient use of scarce financial resources.

Limited teacher knowledge and skill in teaching children with special needs was seen as the barrier to not implementing the Inclusive Education Policy. This is not peculiar

to Papua New Guinea and similar findings are reported else where. For example Avramidis et al., (2000 cited in Connolly, 2004) found through his studies in England that primary schools teachers supported the inclusive education programme but felt that they had very limited knowledge and skills to teach children with special needs. A similar study in New Zealand also revealed that teachers feared teaching children with special needs because of inadequate knowledge and skills in developing inclusive classrooms, the management and organisational skills required and in adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of this group of students (Pronchnow 2000 cited in Connelly, 2004).

The other issue identified by the teachers in this study relates to insufficient number of courses in special education being developed and offered at the teachers colleges. One interviewee stated that she only took a special education course as an elective and this course did not cover many areas of special education. It is very important to develop different courses in special education at the college level so that pre-service teachers are adequately trained to teach children with special needs in regular classrooms. Hence, special education lecturers with limited knowledge should be send overseas for further training to equip themselves with knowledge in order to develop quality courses in the field of special education. Conway (2005) and Wolger (1998) have stated that teachers can only understand the concept of inclusion if they receive sufficient content knowledge in special education.

The teachers also felt that the National Department of Education did not emphasise the importance of implementing the Inclusive Education Policy at all educational levels. Many of the interviewees stated that they had not sighted any circulars from the National Department of Education indicating they should implement the Inclusive Education Policy. It was generally understood by the country's teachers that teachers who took special education courses at teachers' college should be the leaders in changing the attitudes of field teachers who had no knowledge about inclusive education. Yet many of these teachers were reluctant to raise awareness and provide professional development training for staff in the in inclusive education. They felt intimidated attempting to educate other teachers who had more teaching experience than themselves. One female teacher who obtained her diploma in teaching said that she was too scared to tell the more experienced teachers about the concept of

inclusive education and how they could implement the programme, because it was only her third of year teaching.

The teachers in this study believed that the primary school inspectors had also failed to emphasise the importance of the Inclusive Education Policy when inspecting schools. They are the representatives of the policy makers within the Provincial and National Department of Education, yet inclusive education does not seem to be an educational priority. One quarter of the interviewees said that the inspectors had never raised the issue of inclusive education at these schools. This may also indicate that the school inspectors lack the knowledge and skills in inclusive education and therefore could not provide constructive guidelines to the principals and the Boards of Management to develop school policies.

### **1.5 School Policy on Inclusive Education**

According to Mentis et al., (2005) and Mitchell (1999) school policy guidelines should address the interests and needs of all children regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Some of the important issues that should be spelt out in the policy guidelines include; enrolment procedures for children with special needs, strategies to discourage discrimination and segregation, and the promotion of respect for one another. These guidelines should also offer strategies teachers can use to individualise the curriculum to learning and teaching is commensurate with each child's individual abilities. Herward, (1996) also stated that school environment and facilities should be accessible for children with special needs.

In this study, more than three quarters (81%) of the questionnaire respondents agreed that schools should have policy guidelines in relation to implementing inclusive education. Many of the research participants admitted that they had not realised the importance of developing a policy to cater for the interests of children with special needs even though they have been teaching children with special needs. Interestingly, this awareness of this gap in their policies and practices occurred during the interview and was precipitated by the questions posed in the questionnaires and interview. All the children enrolled at the schools were categorised and treated the same using the



general school policy. Hence, teachers stated that they should develop a school policy to cater for children with special needs.

Without, realising the importance of having a written policy to cater for the interests of the children with special needs, one of the deputy principals interviewed had taken the initiative to recognise the potential of having children with disabilities enrolled at the school by awarding prizes to each one at the end of the year. This was an encouragement for parents to send more children with disabilities to school for formal learning. What this example may be an indication of is that although policies may not be in place many teachers may still be using appropriate approaches in their schools and classrooms.

A further question asked of the research participants was whether a teacher in the school was delegated to be responsible for children with special needs. None of the schools represented in this study had a staff member with this delegated responsibility. This reflects the low priority given to this role by teachers, principals and inspectors. All the teachers recommended that the schools should delegate a teacher to be responsible for the welfare of the children with special needs. The role of this teacher would be to ensure that children with special needs were well catered for academically and socially. This role needs to be supported especially in terms of time and resource allocation.

## **1.6 Attitudes of Teachers towards Inclusion Policy**

According to Frost (2002) attitudes of teachers towards inclusion have a huge impact on the implementation of the inclusive approaches. Teachers' attitudes are critical to whether inclusive strategies are implemented or not in regular classrooms. Teachers who develop positive attitudes about inclusive education accept children with special needs into their classrooms with enthusiasm (Mentis et al., 2005) and provide appropriate learning experiences for them and also develop positive interpersonal relationships with them and their families (Fraser, 2005; Smith et al., 2005).

In this study 76% of the teachers from the questionnaire response, supported a change of attitudes in teachers when teaching children with special needs. Teachers who

graduated with a diploma and had taken special education courses at teachers' colleges, were generally supportive of the Inclusive Education Policy. The other teachers with certificate in teaching generally supported that policy but only when the researcher explained the importance of inclusive education. Many teachers admitted that they needed to change their attitudes completely and accept and treat children with special needs like other children without disabilities.

Most teachers felt that attitudes only developed during the learning process and not through socialisation. When children with special needs do not cope with the academic work often the class teacher ignores them after many unsuccessful attempts to assist them grasp a concept. On the other hand, more praise was given to children with special needs when they were physically involved in learning such as arts and crafts or sports. For instance a child with learning difficulties in literacy or numeracy does not seem to receive much praise and encouragement for doing well in the classroom but gets high praise when he or she performs well in a volleyball game.

The negative attitudes of teachers developed seem also associated with inadequate teaching and learning resources and lack of adequate classroom facilities. Teachers felt they could not assist children with special needs when the Department of Education or the Boards of Management would not supply necessary teaching and learning materials, to help the teachers develop remedial work for children with special needs. This concern is widespread and found in studies in Portugal (Silva & Morgado, 2004), Kenya (Wamae & Kan'ethe-Kamau, 2004), Uganda (Kristensen et al., 2003) and Australia (Hay & Winn, 2005). Many teachers in this study indicated that lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials makes it difficult to provide academic assistance to children with disabilities.

Teachers in rural schools often developed negative attitudes towards children with special needs and treated them inappropriately. A female teacher admitted that she needed to totally change her attitude because instead of assisting a child either with a learning difficulty, intellectual disability or a partially hearing impairment in his or her academic work, she normally punished the child for his or her mistakes. She would tell the child to go to the nearby bush and break firewood for her or bring her a bag of sweet potato (kumara) and vegetables the next morning when coming to school. The researcher himself has practiced this attitude as well when he was

teaching in rural schools. Again in this study, teachers admitted that when taking sufficient time in teaching children with special needs who cannot understand the concept quickly makes them frustrated and avoid assisting such children. As a result, they release their frustrations, by imposing punishment on these poor children. Rural schools at times have inadequate teaching and learning resources to provide effective teaching, which contributes to teachers' ignorance in spending more time assisting children with their academic needs.

However, those teachers who have taught children with some forms of disability were more supportive and proactive in helping these children. They felt that these children 'could' learn academically the same as others and when such children perform well it motivates teachers to provide more academic work for them. They were able to provide additional maths work or reading to arouse the interest of the children. What is important here is that when teachers have realistic expectations of children with special needs, they give them change to succeed. This success provides teachers with the motivation to offer further challenge. In other words, success breeds success.

## **Theme 2. Experiences of teachers in implementation of an Inclusive Education Policy**

### ***Section 1: Primary schoolteachers' views and experiences in teaching children with special needs.***

This section sought the teachers' responses as to how they viewed and experienced teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms. Ten questions were developed using the Likert Scale range along the same line as the questionnaire items, to explore more depth participants' views. The results from the data presented are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. The teachers' views and experiences in teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms.**

Quest No	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Some times	%	No response	%
12	64	83%	5	7%	7	9%	1	1%
13	42	55%	11	14%	18	23%	6	8%
14	49	65%	6	8%	19	24%	3	3%
15	45	57%	6	8%	21	28%	5	7%
16	41	53%	10	13%	19	25%	7	9%
17	15	21%	43	56%	16	21%	3	3%
18	52	68%	13	17%	9	12%	3	3%
19	53	69%	12	16%	10	13%	2	2%
20	37	49%	18	23%	18	23%	4	5%
21	55	71%	5	7%	14	19%	3	3%
24	62	81%	5	7%	6	8%	4	5%
29	67	88%	7	9%	0	0%	2	3%

**Q12. Children with special needs demand extra time from regular teachers**

Of the 77 questionnaire respondents, 83% supported the statement that children with special needs demanded extra time from them. This statement was also supported by the majority (11) of the interviewees. One junior male teacher, when asked if he spent more time helping children with special needs, responded, “Definitely, the children need more time from me. It takes me more than half of the period to just explain over and over on the same topic for these children to understand before I tell them to do the exercises I prepared” (T1, S3). Another junior male teacher also supported this comment by saying:

It's time consuming trying to help children especially slow learners. I try to help these children but the time flies away. Spending extra time during recess or lunch is not working well. I just give up and don't bother to repeat the same thing again, I just continue my lesson ... whether they get it or not, that's their problem. (T1, S2)

Only 7% disagreed with this statement on the questionnaire. Nine percent of questionnaire respondents felt that ‘sometimes’ children with special needs did require extra time from their teachers. One of the female interviewees who hold this opinion put part of the blame onto the teachers and commented, “It's true that disabled children need more time from teachers but if we can organise ourselves we will still find time to help these children with academic problems” (T1, S6).

### **Q13. Children with special needs benefit academically from inclusion**

Just over half of the questionnaire respondents (55%) were in favour of this sentiment, along with half of the interviewees. They believed children with special needs could benefit academically through integrating with children without disabilities. A junior male teacher, who supported the statement, said, “I have a male student in my grade six class. He is a disabled boy ... his left leg is small and uses a walking stick to support himself to walk around. He does very well in all his subjects. The children appointed him as their class captain” (T1, S1). A junior female teacher responded, “Yes, definitely these children with disabilities learn a lot. They can do basic addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. They can read simple reading books. One of my dull kids is now working as a storekeeper. I think he can calculate the changes properly” (T1, S5). Another junior female teacher felt that all children would benefit from inclusion if teachers provided sufficient assistance. She said, “There are many children in the classroom who could do better but it depends on the teachers. If teachers can put more effort in helping these children, I think many of these children can do well in their academic work” (T2, S1).

However, 14% of the questionnaire respondents thought children with special needs did not benefit academically. This view was held by one quarter of the teachers who were interviewed. One junior male teacher responded, “I don’t think children with disabilities would benefit from inclusion. How will these disabled children sitting on wheelchairs or blind learn the school work in the classrooms? It’s really hard!” (T1, S1). A senior male teacher explained the reasons for his negative views:

These children who are disabled sit very quietly in group work and the bright ones are doing a lot of talking. I even put the bright kids with the dull kids in one desk; the dull kids are usually scared to tell their friends to help them in any activities or exercises. (T2, S2)

The other 23% of the respondents were undecided and placed themselves in the ‘sometimes’ category. Three interviewees were also undecided. One of the female teachers stated, “In my opinion I think some disabled children can perform well in

their schoolwork but other disabled children will look stupid in the classroom and make teachers struggle to teach” (T1, S4). Another junior male teacher made these comments:

Ok, I would say every child in the class interacts well with each other ... because these children have their relatives whom they can share their problems with. However, sometimes it depends on the type of lessons I teach. In English and maths lessons bright kids like to do most of the discussions and slow learners keep quiet but in physical education lessons slow learners can do the talking and participate well in expressive arts lessons too. (T1, S3)

**Q14. Children with special needs build stronger social relationships from inclusion**

Sixty-five percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that children with special needs would develop social competencies from being included in regular schools and classrooms. However, not many interviewees thought this would happen in reality. Out of the five teachers interviewed who supported the statement, one junior female teacher said, “I think children with disabilities would enjoy playing with their classmates ... Maybe not all the time but when children with special needs socially interact with their classmates, they will socialise freely among their classmates”(T2, S3). Another senior female teacher and deputy principal shared her experiences of how a few children with disabilities developed good relationships with their friends both in the classroom and at the school:

I taught two children, both physically disabled in different years ... one on a wheelchair and the other was using a support stick like crutches. The one with the crutches is a funniest boy in the whole school. Everyone likes him to crack jokes; even teachers admired him as well. The boy on the wheelchair is pushed around the school. The children usually take turns to push him around. So that means the children like these two children. So I think disabled children will make enough friends with other children. (T2, S4)

Eight percent disagreed with this view. This was also supported along with a small number (4) of the interviewees. One senior female teacher stated that he thought

children with special needs would be scared of making friends with the children without special needs. When asked to give her reason she replied, “I think the normal children might like these disabled children but not all the time. Normal children want to enjoy playing by themselves so disabled children will be lonely.” (T2, S2)

Twenty-eight percent of the questionnaire respondents were undecided as to whether or not children with special needs would benefit socially. A deputy principal made these remarks when interviewed:

I don't know if these children with disabilities would benefit socially from the inclusion. I have taught many disabled children and see that sometimes when the good children are not happy with the disabled children, they say bad things or like describing them ... you blind kid, cripple leg, or deaf. But this new policy you are now saying, is a new thing and I am not sure. (T1, S6)

Another female deputy principal mentioned how her children socially interact with one another:

Oh, they get on very well with other children inside and outside the classroom or our physical education games and sports. It only comes when normal children tease them of things they do are not in favour in the class. For example, they might shout at the child saying, ‘you deaf’ when the child with hearing impairment does something wrong. That’s when the child’s morale goes down. (T2, S4)

A senior male teacher had a similar response said, “I think children with special needs might not cope well with the rest of the children in the classroom at the beginning but they might make friends later” (T2, S2). When asked further if he had taught children with disabilities, his response was ‘yes’. He had taught many children with learning difficulties and two children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The researcher then asked if these children interacted socially with children without disabilities and he replied, “Oh yes, they do! Some of these slow learners do not perform well in their academic work but they are really good in outside activities like sports. So they mix and play with other bright children.” The researcher again asked if the interviewee could specify which children with disabilities would not benefit socially, he replied ‘I think children who are totally disabled like having many body

parts not functioning, deaf and dumb kids or blind kids too” (T2, S2). Other interviewees made similar comments about all categories of disability they thought would benefit socially, but also included children with physical disabilities.

**Q15. Regular children benefit academically from inclusion**

Having determined how the respondents felt about the academic benefits gained by children with disabilities, the interest moved to the benefit to those children without disabilities. Did they benefit from inclusion?

More than half (57%) of the questionnaire respondents agreed that children without disabilities would benefit more from the inclusion in their schools and classrooms of children with disabilities. More than half (7) of the interviewees supported this position. A junior female teacher, who supported the statement, made this comment:

Yes, I think children without disabilities would benefit academically because some disabled children are clever and help the children who are not disabled ... I gave an example earlier about a disabled boy I taught in grade six. He is a very clever student and also the class captain. He helps children who are not disabled in their schoolwork. In my opinion, I think normal children can benefit from children with disabilities. (T2, S4)

Another junior female teacher said, “Children with out disabilities while helping children with disabilities also gain confidence in understanding the concept teachers teach in the classroom” (T2, S6).

Eight percent of the respondents did not agree with the statement. This was also supported by about one third of the interviewees who stated that children without disabilities would not benefit academically. One of the junior female interviewees expressed her thoughts. “I don’t think normal children would benefit from inclusion. They are the ones who are helping the disabled kids. How will these non-disabled children learn when these disabled children can’t teach them?” (T1, S1). A senior male teacher identified a reason for children not benefiting from inclusion:

Some of these bright children are selfish and do not want to help those children. They hide the work from their friends so I don’t have to force the brighter kids to assist



them. When I tell them, they help but if I don't, these children don't help the dull ones and disabled ones. (T1, S6)

Another junior female teacher stated that children without disabilities form their own small groups and do not associate with children with disabilities. According to her experience, she said, "They don't help disabled children much so inside the classroom and this is also reflected how they play outside" (T1, S4).

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents were undecided and placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category, while 7% of the respondents made no response. The 28% who did not commit themselves did not elaborate on their reasons for this in the open – ended section of the questionnaire so it is impossible to know the reasoning behind this response.

#### **Q16. Regular children benefit socially from inclusion**

Almost half of the respondents (53%) stated that they supported this statement. This was also supported by more than half (8) of the interviewees. One of the female interviewees explained it this way:

Yes, these normal children enjoy staying with children who are disabled ... Just imagine the story I told you earlier about this disabled boy with the walking stick. He likes to make jokes and everywhere he goes in the school ground a crowd would follow him. In the class, we laugh and laugh because he is a funny kid. Many normal children like him very much. (T2, S3)

A male teacher and principal interviewed commented that culture could be a contributing factor to respecting others. He responded, "I think the children will respect one another because in our culture we show respect for one another. So I believe children will accept the other disabled children and play with them." (T1, S5)

A deputy principal commented on the same sentiments:

Well, in my opinion I think children who are not disabled will feel sorry for the children with disabilities so help them a lot. For example, if there is a child with wheelchair in the classroom, the boys would like to take turns in pushing the

wheelchair around the school during recess and lunch. But they would get on well with the children with disabilities. (T1, S6)

Thirteen percent of the questionnaire respondents disagreed with this statement. One third (4) of the interviewees also felt that regular children did not benefit socially from inclusion. One of the senior female teachers, when asked if her children interact socially, replied:

It's the same inside the classroom. Children who do well form their own small groups outside and play by themselves. They do not want to associate with children with special needs. In this case I go and sit with the children with special needs and chat with them so they feel as they are part of the class. (T2, S3)

Another female teacher and deputy principal responded in the same manner:

There are three boys who misbehave in the class all the time and the children do not like them to be in their class. Well everyone hates these undisciplined boys and I have to punish them every day for making a lot of noises, playing in the classroom and teasing the girls. (T2, S4)

The other 25% of the respondents were undecided and placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category. Seven percent did not answer this question.

**Q17. Children with special needs learn more in regular classrooms than special education centres**

The statement, about children with special needs learning more in regular classrooms, received a mixed response.

Twenty-one percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that children with special needs could learn more in regular classrooms rather than being in the special education centres. This was supported by half (6) of the interviewees. A junior female teacher said, "Disabled children can do well in the classrooms. I have taught some children who were disabled and they have learned well" (T1, S5). Another male teacher supported and said, "Disabled children have done well in regular classrooms just like the non-

disabled children so I don't see any reasons why they should not fit in with other normal children and learn"(T1, S4).

Twenty-five percent of the respondents opposed the statement. This was in their responses in the open-ended questionnaire section. Six teachers emphasised that children with disabilities need special equipment to support their learning so should be enrolled in special education centres, while the other eight teachers commented that the government should establish a special education resource centre in the province. One quarter (3) of the interviewees also supported this position. One female teacher and deputy principal stated, "I don't it's a good idea for disabled children to be enrolled in regular classrooms. They should be enrolled in special centres where there are teachers who are especially trained and there are equipment and materials available to teach them" (T2, S4). Another male teacher and deputy principal totally opposed the idea and commented, "These children just can't learn. Their brains are not functioning well and they simply waste teachers' time and other children's learning so they must be enrolled in special schools" (T1, S6).

Twenty-one percent of the questionnaire respondents who answered in the 'sometimes' category indicated that only some children with disabilities could be enrolled in regular schools, but not all. Three interviewees agreed of the opinion. One junior female teacher stated:

I don't think we should teach all children with disabilities. But some children with mild disabilities can be taught in the classrooms. Others would be difficult for us so these children must be enrolled in special education centres. It's good for them go to special education centres to get proper learning. (T2, S5)

**Q18. Classroom workload will prevent teachers assisting with the academic needs of children with special needs**

More than half of the questionnaire respondents (68%) agreed that existing classroom workloads are such that the additional requirements of providing for children with special needs would present an unrealistic expectation. Three quarters of the interviewees shared these sentiments. A senior male teacher remarked:

To tell you the fact is that all through out Enga Province, we teachers forget about these slow learners because we have 50 to 60 children in our classroom and we have no time to actually sit down and assist the slow ones and find out what their problems are. Maybe they might have social problems, family problems, which contribute to their learning but the ratio 40:1 is too much for a teacher to carry out such assistances. (T2, S2)

In relation to the class size, another junior male teacher stated that the ratio for teacher to students was too high. The Department of Education has recommended a ratio of 1:40, which the teacher felt it was too great to cater for every child's need. He suggested that if the ratio was 1:20, he would have enough time to spend assisting children with special needs. A junior female teacher agreed:

Yes, there is really a lot of workload. When I first did the course at the college, I was excited to implement it out in the schools but now I am teaching grade seven and eight students with 30 to 40 students and there is so much preparation, teaching and marking to be done. I quite honestly spend no time helping individual children with their academic problems. (T1, S5)

A senior female teacher responded in a similar manner:

It's a lot of workload. I do admit that I sometimes give up and reject these children because there are more things to prepare in order to teach both the normal children and disabled children. Another thing is that we need some special teaching resources in order to help such children. (T2, S3)

When asked what types of special equipment she was referring to, she replied, "equipment like photocopy machines, typewriters, and duplicating machines, where we can run remedial worksheet off for children. This will make our work easier in preparing work for disabled children."

Only 17% of the questionnaire respondents disagreed with this statement. A small number of the interviewees (3) also believed they could manage the pressure of teaching both children with special needs and regular children. One junior female

teacher commented, “Yes there is workload but I am a teacher so I make time available for these children and help them” (T1, S4). The other junior male teacher stated that he had a heavy workload when he was teaching lower grades but he managed to assist students who were slow in their academic learning while teaching upper grades. When the researcher asked the teacher why, he replied, “I can provide enough work for other children to do and spend enough time with the slow learners and explain to them the importance of the exercises” (T1, S1). Another junior female teacher, who was concerned about educating children with special needs, commented:

I think we teachers have enough time to look into our children’s needs but we are just too lazy to assist them. If I can find time to provide work for my children with special needs, I don’t see any reason why others say there is too much workload. I correct their work and set up new work for them. If we plan our time properly we won’t have too much workload. (T1, S5)

Twelve percent of the questionnaire respondents were seemed unsure about the impact of classroom workload when teaching children with special needs in their classes, and placed themselves in the ‘sometimes’ category. Three percent of the respondents made no response.

#### **Q19. Teachers use a separate curriculum to cater for children with special needs**

Approximately two thirds of the questionnaire respondents (69%) supported having a separate curriculum for children with special needs in their classrooms. Two respondents, who provided additional information from the open-ended questions, gave an explanation for their response. They mentioned that there should be a different curriculum developed for children with special needs, but did not provide any supportive reasons on the importance of developing a different curriculum for children with special needs.

However, the interviewees who provided responses to the same statement expressed a different viewpoint. All 12 teachers strongly emphasised that there should be only one curriculum for all students in the classroom. In response to further questioning on this topic, a principal who was interviewed remarked:

There are not two curriculums being used here in my school. We use the official curriculum from the Department of Education for all the teachers in each grade to use and teach their children. Whether this child is clever or dummy, one curriculum will be used to teach all. (T1, S5)

The researcher asked if those teachers using the one curriculum were preparing two different lessons for their children in the class and his response was, “No I don’t think my teachers are preparing two lessons. Maybe they may prepare activities differently for slow learners and fast learners.” Another junior teacher felt the same way:

Yes, it’s the same curriculum but I prefer extra work for those children who don’t understand the topic I teach. For example, in a maths lesson I teach a topic like addition and if disabled children do not understand I prepare work according to their understanding.

(T1, S2)

#### **Q20. Children with special needs disrupt other children’s learning**

Forty-nine percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed with this statement and clearly considered children with special needs do disrupt other children’s learning. Twelve respondents in the open-ended section explained this further emphasising that children with special needs disrupt and lower the standard of lessons for other children and their learning. Most (nine) of the interviewees supported this view. For instance, a junior female teacher made this remark:

These children make me spend too much time trying to explain to the activities. For example, if I teach short division to my grade four class and put some exercises on the blackboard, I will sit with a slow learner trying to explain how to get the answer and by that time, most bright kids will finish and make a lot of noise. (T1, S4)

The researcher asked what she did to manage both groups of students, those who finished early and those who were slow to finish. She replied:

Well the maths lesson is only 30 minutes I have to stop the lesson and move to the next lesson. I don't know whether the child gets it or not, I have to move on with what I plan to teach for the week. (T1, S4)

These views were shared by most of the teachers interviewed. However 23% of the questionnaire respondents disagreed that children with special needs disrupt the regular children's learning but did not give any explanation in the open-ended category of the questionnaire.

The other 23% of the questionnaire respondents placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category and were supported by few (3) teachers who were interviewed of the same statement. One of the male teachers and deputy principal stated:

Yes in some lessons the slow learners normally drag the class but some lessons no...like doing English work or math work, slow learners are the troublemakers in dragging the time but in arts and craft or physical education lessons they can cope up well. (T1, S6)

A significant proportion of the questionnaire respondents (23%) marked 'sometimes' to this statement. This probably meant exactly that, these teachers believed that children with special needs 'sometimes' disrupted other children's learning.

## ***Section 2: Collaboration to effectively implement inclusive education policy***

This section focuses on the importance of collaboration, to assist children with special needs learn academically and socially alongside their peers with disabilities in regular school. The three questions asked of participants focused on the role and importance of student peer support, teacher and parent/caregiver collaboration, and the support of specialists.

### **Q21. Peer support helps children with special needs both academically and socially**

Seventy-one percent of the respondents strongly agreed that peer support was important. The statement was also strongly supported by all 12 interviewees. A

deputy principal and female teacher commented that: “Yes definitely, because peer teaching supports me very well. Some bright kids in the class usually help me by teaching and explaining difficult lessons to slow learners or short-sighted children. I see many children with special needs learn from peer teaching” (T2, S4). A senior male teacher mentioned:

Yes, we have micro group work called ‘workstation’. I put children of mixed abilities into their workstation. They start to brainstorm the topic and then go into the big group. At the station I see the dull child start to learn faster. The child is no longer scared to express himself in public. When children are in their little workstation, they all contribute and participate well. (T2, S3)

Only seven percent of the questionnaire respondents disagreed that peer tutoring could assist children with special needs. Sixteen percent of the questionnaire respondents placed themselves in the ‘sometimes’ category but did not explain any reasons.

**Q24. Teachers’ and parents’ relationships are important for children with special needs to learn.**

Eighty-one percent of the questionnaire respondents strongly supported the idea of having teachers and parents working collaboratively in order to meet the needs of children with special needs. All interviewees provided unanimous support to this statement. One principal expressed his views this way:

Parents are important partners for the teachers and they have to work together so the child will learn properly and behave in the class and come to school everyday. Teachers and parents have to come together and solve the child’s academic problems or social problems (T1, S5)

However, one junior female teacher stated that sometimes this did not happen:

Parents should be involved. But some parents don’t care about their children. When we identify their children’s learning difficulties or behaviour problems and request parents to come they never turn up most times. So for this inclusive programme, they have to be involved in order to help their own kids’ education. (T2, S1)



A male deputy principal expressed the importance of making parents aware of the policy so that they will be more involved said, “Awareness is very important. There should be awareness on this policy in order to gain publicity. At least draw the attention of the parents to see the importance of educating their children” (T1, S6).

Thirty-eight responses obtained from the open-ended section of the questionnaire strongly emphasised that teachers should encourage the parents to know the importance of the Inclusive Education Policy and continue to involve them.

Five percent felt that the relationship was not that important, while six percent were uncertain and responded in the ‘sometimes’ category. The remaining 4% did not answer the question.

**Q29. Government should provide more specialists to assist teachers to implement the policy**

Out of the 77 teachers, who responded to the questionnaire, 88% agreed with this statement. More support was evident in the responses to the open-ended questions. Fourteen teachers mentioned that the national government should train and provide specialists to support the inclusive programme in the schools. All the interviewees supported this statement. One junior male teacher, who strongly supported the idea, said, “The government should provide specialists to go around schools and assist teachers” (T1, S2). A female junior teacher wanted specialists in different areas of disabilities, “We need specialist people who can help us teach how to use Braille, sign languages or counsel children with social problems” (T2, S1).

## **Discussion**

### **Theme 2: Part A. Benefits of Inclusion**

The concept of inclusion is to provide children with special needs the right to be educated along with non-disabled children in the same classroom (Inclusion International, 1998). Segregation of children with special needs into special education centres is much less popular in many countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many more children with special needs are now educated alongside non-disabled children. It is

widely accepted that the regular classroom should be a place where all children have the right to belong and to talk, work and share together (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Smith et al., 2005). Teachers are now expected to provide sufficient learning opportunities for all the children in their classroom. It is believed that children develop positive social relationships while interacting with one another through class work, non-contact teaching times and sports.

## **2.1 Academic benefits from inclusion**

The concept of the inclusion is to give every child with a special need a chance to have the right to participate and benefit from all school activities, both academically and socially (Andrew & Lupart, 1993; Gerschel, 1998). In terms of academic benefits, children with special needs should have equal opportunities to work along side their peers while acknowledging their common and different needs. When children are treated equally, each pupil should develop the confidence to learn according to his or her intellectual ability (Gerschel, 1998).

In this study, 55% of the respondents agreed that children with special needs benefited academically from inclusion. The findings revealed children with special needs were considered by many of their teachers to perform well according to their academic learning level. One of the male teachers, who shared his experiences in teaching a student with a physical disability, commented that this student did extremely well in all subjects. This indicates that some of these teachers believed children with diverse special education needs could benefit from inclusion. However, they did comment that children with only some forms of disabilities were able to compete academically against the non-disabled children. They considered children had to have the intellectual ability to conceive and analyse information passed onto them. Not only did it appear that the type and level of disability was influential in academic achievement, these teachers felt the particular subject was also a critical element.

Subjects like English and maths that required intellectual ability to grasp can present a huge challenge to some children with special needs from the teachers. However, subjects like physical education and arts and craft require less supervision and children with special needs were reported by their teachers to perform well.

Educating children with special needs in regular classrooms was definitely a challenge for the teachers, especially in providing sufficient academic support. Many teachers admitted that children with special needs would benefit academically if teachers could spend more time and put more effort into helping them. Similarly, these teachers believed that children with special needs would benefit academically if there were academic support from children without disabilities.

While only a small group of teachers felt that children with special needs would not benefit from inclusion, most of this group qualified this by saying that 'some' children with special needs might benefit. They felt that certain types of disabilities would prevent children from benefiting academically in regular classrooms. Although some supported the Inclusive Policy, they thought children with more severe disabilities should not be enrolled in regular classrooms. These disabilities included children who were visual impaired, children with physical disabilities in wheelchairs and the more severe disabilities. Children with these disabilities would make it difficult for the teachers to teach. Teachers commented that when children had these disabilities, it was difficult to provide academic support.

There are reasons that would support their arguments. First, the learning facilities for these children such as Braille machines, hearing aids and wheelchairs are difficult for schools to obtain, even through the Department of Education. Green et al., (2004) and Lyons (2005) stated that the use of assistive technology such as Braille machines, wheelchairs, TVs and hearing aids would really help the children academically. This makes it difficult to provide assistance for children with sensory impairment or a disability requiring technological support when this is not available.

Second, many teachers reported that children with special needs often remain in the same grade for another year because their intellectual ability to receive and analyse information was inadequate to take them to the next grade. A similar study by Connelly (2004) in New Zealand found that most principals were concerned about how children with special needs would cope with academic work when progressing from one year to another, because their intellectual ability often means they are slow to process information. Another similar study in Singapore of students with visual impairment in mainstream schools revealed that they had difficulty coping with the

academic work given to them and at the same time were pressured with a higher workload. The level of work was found to be above their performance level (West, Houghton, Taylor & Ling, 2004).

Without appropriate curriculum differentiation, children with special needs will undoubtedly fall behind. If children with special needs are to gain academically, this will only occur if the learning is tailored to their level. There are unlikely to be academic benefits for these children, without curriculum modification.

The statement as to whether non-disabled children would benefit from inclusion received these following responses. Fifty seven percent of the respondents agreed that children without disabilities benefit academically from the inclusion. Some of the reasons that emerged were first, children without, while assisting children with special needs academically, develop the greater confidence and understanding of themselves. Second, children with some disabilities can also provide assistance for their peers without disabilities and other children with disabilities.

However, some teachers commented that children with disabilities become too dependent on non-disabled children, instead of learning from them. A comment from a female teacher stated that children without disabilities often felt sorry for children with disabilities and only provided assistance, while others just provided answers because they did not want to waste time explaining the concepts in more detail. Neilson (2005) stated that when people with disabilities are helpless and marginalised people take for granted that they should provide assistance for them.

Non-disabled children were also reluctant to provide academic assistance to the children with special needs therefore, how would both children exchange their knowledge of understanding? This negative perception from non-disabled children indicated that children with special needs were too dependent and children do not want to provide continuous academic support.

Furthermore, non-disabled children were always restless when teachers spent more time on children with special needs. Often they develop negative attitudes towards these children and don't help them during peer teaching or group work.

## 2.2 Social benefits from inclusion

Another major aspect of inclusion is for all children to socialise together regardless of their abilities. This is to promote positive attitudes among the children rather than discrimination. Andrews & Lupart (1993) stated that inclusion promotes social competencies between children with special needs and children without disabilities within the school environment. This was also supported by Conway (2005), who stated that both groups of children are able to share ideas together and assist each other in all schoolwork and outside the classroom they interact together by playing, chatting and sharing lunches together. O' Brien & Ryba (2005) challenge teachers to take every opportunity to encourage social interaction between the children with special needs as well as with non-disabled children.

In this study, 65% of the respondents agreed that children with special needs can build strong social relationships with the children without in regular schools and classrooms. Many teachers commented that children with special needs they had taught had socialised well with children without special needs. However, there was a difference between how children were socially interacting inside the classroom and outside the classroom. The teachers felt that children with special needs were very quiet and did not interact well with their classmates inside the classroom. In group discussion or activities they participated very little compared to children without special needs. Sometimes they appeared too self-conscious to approach others for academic assistance.

However, there was more social interaction during outdoor activities and in the non-contact hours. Children with special needs and their peers shared lunch, played ball games, sat and told stories together. One female teacher stated how she has experienced teaching two students with disabilities who developed magnificent social relationships with their classmates and the whole school. A male student who had cerebral palsy normally used crutches to walk and she said, "This student was the best comedian in the school. He cracked jokes and always made everyone laugh. He involved himself in sports especially becoming umpire of ball games such as volleyball and basketball. He interacted extremely well with both the non-disabled children and the teachers." This is an important example to emphasise. Inclusion is not just about providing for needs of children with special needs, it is also about

developing their strengths and abilities. Many of the responses to the questionnaire and interview questions reflected a lack of knowledge, skill, ability, etc. Few teachers talked about the talents or abilities of their children with special needs.

A few children with special needs were recognised for their potential to provide leadership within the classroom and the school environment. This reflects the true spirit of social interaction between children with special needs and the children without special needs. For instance a male pupil with a physical disability was nominated as a class captain. He was well respected by both his classmates and the teachers. The potential of the children with special needs to participate and develop social relationship are recognised more important than the disabilities they have.

The statement asking whether children without special need benefit socially from inclusion was also supported by 53% of the respondents from the questionnaire and more than half of the interviewees also supported the statement. The children without special needs have socially interacted well with the children with special needs. Many provided academic assistance, shared their lunch with them and even got involved together in different outdoor activities.

There was one main reason why children without special needs showed more love for their friends with special needs. This is a reflection of their cultural value of loving and caring for one another. In Engan culture everyone has to respect one another so children without are required to show respect and provide support whenever needed by the children with special needs.

Although many teachers supported the statement, 13% who opposed it provided some important comments. First, they said that often students only interacted with children of their same tribe and spent less time with others. Second, children without do not want to interact with children who have behavioural problems because these children can be real nuisances. As Farmer et al., (1996) commented, some children with special needs can have considerable difficulty in their relationships with their classmates. When children with special needs, especially those with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) or emotional and behavioural problems (EBD),

displayed poor social skills, their peers did not easily accept them, making it difficult for them to develop and maintain friendships.

However, what was evident in the teachers' responses was that the relationship between children with special needs and their peers without disabilities was that it was not truly mutual. The children without special needs tended to take a 'caring' approach to their interaction with peers with special needs.

The non-disabled children often unwittingly undermined the capabilities of children with special needs and made decisions for them. O'Brien & Ryba, (2005) commented that the attitude of caring for children with special needs still exists with children without special needs in regular schools, instead of providing equitable social interactions. It is important teachers do not model or enforce inappropriate dependency.

### *PART B. Teachers' experiences while teaching children with special needs*

This section focuses on some of the teachers' experiences while teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms. Teachers play a major role in planning and implementing teaching and learning strategies to all students in the regular classroom regardless of their status. The success of inclusion in the classroom is unquestionably a reflection of teachers' attitudes towards children with special needs (Inclusion, International, 1998). Inclusive teachers make sure students with special needs have the same rights to a quality education as students without special needs (Mitchell, 1999; Spedding, 2005). If teachers have positive attitudes to providing the best education for all children then the chances of inclusion working in significantly enhanced.

#### **2.3 Children with special needs demand extra time**

Effective teaching requires considerable planning and preparation. Teachers have to spend time planning their teaching, prepare materials, organise the work of teacher aids, as well as attend to administrative responsibilities. This can result in high levels of stress. For instance, a study by Whiting and Young (1996) in Queensland indicated

that teachers were under additional pressure teaching children with special needs. It was the additional time required to plan and teach these children that created stress for the teachers.

This study confirmed these findings. Eighty three percent of teachers indicated that they spent extra time assisting children with special educational needs. Most of these children had difficulty with literacy and numeracy. The teachers admitted that they had to spend more time preparing remedial work and helping them understand concepts.

Explanations of lessons and the activities for children with special needs usually demands significantly more time. Teachers admitted that introducing new lessons and exercises consumed a lot of time and often took time from other lessons. Children with special needs often require more examples and greater explanation and the teachers said that this meant they had less time to practice for themselves. This could impact on the class timetable because sometimes one lesson was stretched into the next and the rest of the class had to wait for children with special needs to catch up. One teacher stated that every lesson has a time schedule and many times she skips lessons because she has spend extra time assisting children with special needs and especially the children with learning difficulties, partial visual and hearing impairments. The more time teachers spend assisting children with special needs and preparing extra work; the more likely, it seem, they are prone to develop frustrations, emotional pressure and some negative feelings about assisting those children again. This also affects the learning of the children without special needs. Similarly, studies in New Zealand (Whitehead & Ryba, 1994), England (Williams & Gersch, 2004), Zimbabwe (Mushoriwa, 2001) and South Africa (Engelbrecht, Swart & Eloff, 2003) identified similar issues. These studies indicated that teachers were so stressed by spending more time providing academic assistance to children with special needs.

Some teachers who opposed the statement, shifted the blame back to the teachers. They claimed that teachers were insufficiently organised to assist children with special needs. A male teacher admitted that children with special needs demanded more time, but he felt that if teachers organised their time well there should be enough time to assist the children without special needs with their academic needs.



From this and other studies, it is clear that teachers do report that providing for children with special needs require extra time, and there is also some suggestion that this creates additional pressure and stress. However, it is very important to point out that the teachers in this study were not trained in teaching children with special needs in their regular classrooms. While it would be spurious to suggest more training is the solution to this problem, professional development in such areas such as teaching techniques, and management and organisational strategies can make a considerable difference in the same vein, the provision of appropriate resource can assist teachers and be a time saver. There is little doubt other factors, such as class size, access to specialist support, and some classroom release time can make a real difference.

## **2.4 Teachers' workload**

Teaching is an open-ended occupation and teachers nowadays are constantly required to take on additional work. Teachers talk about an overcrowded curriculum, greater pressure to individualise their teaching, to assess more frequently and to keep up-to-date for professionally. Teaching children with special needs also means an additional commitment. It usually means more planning and preparation to meet the needs of this group of children. Forlin (1998), and Heflin and Bullock (1999) agreed and stated that having children with special needs in a regular classroom creates an additional workload for teachers. A study carried out by Male & May (1997) on primary school teachers in England revealed that regular classroom teachers spend between 60 –70 hours per week working at schools to meet the needs of children with special needs. Many of them have indicated that they were under pressure, stressed and burnt out.

In this study similar results were obtained. More than three fifths of the respondents (68%) agreed that the existing workload was too high for teachers to assist children with special educational needs. Teachers admitted that more work was required to plan and develop remedial work for children with special needs. The teachers in this study said they needed teaching resources and equipment to help them provide sufficient work for such children, and that in general those were not available. A study by Engelbrecht et al., (2003) in South Africa found that teachers in mainstreams had to improvise to meet the needs of children with intellectual disabilities.

Class size was also a contributing factor in levels of stress for teachers towards accommodating children's different educational needs. In Papua New Guinea, the pupil to teacher ratio is unpredictable. Some classes have forty students to one teacher. In rural schools teachers practice the multigrade approach because many teachers do not want to teach in these areas, therefore existing teachers have to combine classes. The multigrade approach involves combining two grades together and only one teacher teaches both grades in a same classroom but with different learning activities for each grade but using the same topic. One teacher admitted that the ratio of 1:40 or 1:50 was just too much for him to spend time with children with learning needs. He had to move on with his daily lessons to cover the programme and thus did not spend time with children with special needs. There were many other teachers who shared the same sentiments in regard to the class size. This issue is universal, but particularly significant in less developed countries such as in Uganda (Kristensen et al., 2003) and Zimbabwe (Mushoriwa, 2001).

A lack of curriculum materials, teaching and learning resources also puts pressure on teachers who have improvised with whatever teaching materials are available. Teachers in the rural areas felt this demand particularly because these teachers have much more limited resource support.

A few teachers (17%) who were interviewed admitted that teaching demands were not too high but also said that teachers needed to plan well. These teachers believed that there was still enough time to help the very few children with special needs in the classrooms if teachers planned their daily activities well. One female teacher admitted she has been teaching children with disabilities and had found time to provide extra work for them and corrected their work. She thought teachers were just too lazy or less motivated to do the extra work. There is little doubt that planning is a key to successful management. However, without adequate training teachers may lack the knowledge to plan effective programmes.

There are many factors that impact on teacher workload. To some extent it is an individual issue, and what seems untenable to one teacher may be quite easily managed by another. Many things affect levels of workload but clearly class size is a

primary concern. There is a good argument for recommending that teacher who have a significant number of children with special needs in their classrooms, should have a smaller total class number overall.

## **2.5 The issue of separate curriculum**

The curriculum should provide the educational framework to all the children in a class. It contains all the content knowledge for teachers to use and teach irrespective of the learner. Topics are provided with different lessons and activities for teachers to use. An inclusive curriculum means that there is one curriculum for all the students to participate in (Conway, 2005; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Many countries have adapted an inclusive curriculum to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children. In New Zealand, the Curriculum Framework principles are focused on each individual pupil who is at the centre of all teaching and learning programmes. Children with special educational needs should be taught the regular curriculum and teachers should modify the content and teaching approaches to meet their individual education needs (Conway, 2005; Inclusion International, 1998).

The issue of providing an inclusive curriculum for all children received a mixed response from the research participants. This study revealed that 69% of the respondents from the questionnaire supported having a “separate” curriculum for children with special needs. However, the interviewees’ responses to the same question reflected a different viewpoint. They all opposed the idea of providing a different curriculum for children with special needs. This discrepancy between the questionnaire responses and the responses of the interviewees is interesting to ponder. It could be that through the interview process teachers became more appreciative of the importance of including children with special needs and recognised that a single curriculum was consistent with this goal.

However, in this study, it is questionable if all but a small number of teachers appropriately modify the curriculum to suit the needs of individual children, but teach directly to a single undifferentiated curriculum. A few teachers admitted that they spend most time trying to explain the concept to children with special needs while children without special needs have to do the same exercise within the given time. This clearly indicates that lessons are not modified to suit the learning needs of

children with special needs. If lessons are modified, teaching and learning will progress smoothly without much interruption from other children. This suggests that field teachers still lack the knowledge to modify the curriculum content and require in-service training in this area.

## **2.6 Peer Support**

A peer support system has been proposed as one of the best approaches to helping children with special needs in regular classrooms and has played a major role in promoting inclusion for all in many countries. According to Undvari-Solner and Thousand (1995), peer teaching has benefits to all children in the classroom. It provides both the academic learning and builds social relationships among children with special needs and their peers. Children are able to share knowledge together and build effective relationships.

In this study 70% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that peer teaching had some positive learning outcomes for children with special need, and helped develops stronger relationships among all children. One of the female teachers stated that peer teaching helped her to provide teaching and learning for children with mild disabilities and learning difficulties. She said peer teaching provided an opportunity for children without special needs to spend time together with children with special needs and to provide academic assistance. This had really helped her children to understand the lesson concepts well.

Another important issue highlighted by the teachers was that most children who were bright academically assisted their own relatives and the explanation was done both in English as well their own native languages, which made the learning for children with special needs, much easier. This helped the teachers to cover lessons as planned.

In addition, teachers also mentioned that peer support had relieved them from stress of meeting the needs of children with special needs. Many of them commented that they had time to prepare for the next lessons or mark children's work while peers were used to provide assistance to children who had difficulties understanding the lessons.

However, peer support sometimes does operate so effectively. A few teachers in this study admitted that children without special needs sometimes were impatient and developed negative attitudes to providing continuous support for children with special needs. Bright children often developed uncaring attitudes in providing peer support because they did not want to share their knowledge with such children. This made it difficult for children with special needs to progress. Therefore, it is important that teachers are selective in who they choose to work with children with special needs. In addition, these children providing peer support need guidance to help them to undertake this role effectively. Teachers also have to be wary of over using children, which can result in resentment and defeat the purpose of peer support.

Peer teaching may not be suitable for some children with disabilities. In this study teachers admitted that they lacked the knowledge and skills to communicate with children who had specific disabilities, such as visual and hearing impairment and they themselves needed training. If teachers have difficulties, so will peers generally, therefore, it would be important for peers also to receive training in areas of disability. For instance, children with hearing impairment need sign language to communicate and therefore, children who are willing to provide useful tutoring must be trained how to communicate using sign language. This will again ease the pressure from the class teacher and learning will progress.

## **2.7 Teacher and Parents Partnerships**

To effectively implement inclusive education in schools parents and teachers have to work collaboratively together. According to Fraser (2005) and Mitchell (1999) teachers have a responsibility to develop a good working relationship with the parents of children with special needs. Parents almost always know more about their children's needs and therefore teachers need to learn from them. It is important to share ideas together about how best the child can be taught. Ashman and Elkins (2002) stated that teachers should inform parents of their children's progress and needs so that parents can also provide consistent support at home.

The collaboration of teachers and parents to provide assistance for children with special needs was strongly supported by the teachers. In this study these teachers felt that parents were important partners in providing support in their children's learning.

They believed they had to work collaboratively together to assist children with their academic and social learning.

Some of the issues that teachers and parents could collaborate on include developing Individual Education Plans (IEP) for children about how to address the academic and social problems of the child and plan how the child could improve from it. Parents should be involved in any activities. As Flavell (2001) and Moltzen (2005) stated teachers children benefit from teachers and parents working together towards shared and agreed upon objectives. The IEP is an important mechanism to facilitating this. Inviting parents or caregivers to participate in any academic programme that would benefit from parental support. Many parents have vast knowledge and this can help teachers to utilise their expertises and experiences to teach all children.

This study revealed that many teachers do not spend time with parents discussing their child's academic social needs, apart from at the end of term parent/ teacher interview times. This is probably because they did not understand the concept of inclusive education and that to effectively include children with special needs in the regular classroom and school collaboration is essential. It is one thing to acknowledge this concept in principle, it is another to put it into practice. Teachers know that it is important but often do not follow this through in practice.

Occasionally, parents and teachers meet but to address discipline problems caused by the child, not for academic or social purposes. However, parents probably feel they have little to offer in the academic aspect of the children's education. In the study teachers commented that there should be more awareness of the Inclusive Education Policy so parents understand their role better in providing assistance for their child with special needs. These teachers felt that the Department of Education should organise training workshops for parents of children with disabilities but also regular teachers of how they collaboratively they can participate in the children's education.

Some major issues that could be encountered in eliciting regarding parental assistance with homework or other educational activities are that most parents are illiterate. Many parents are illiterate especially rural areas and would be difficult for them to provide academic assistance apart from other support. For example, Developing an

IEP would be totally new concept for illiterate parents. The living conditions for most children in rural areas would be another contributing factor toward parents not providing assistance for children at home. For instance, sometimes it is difficult to obtain lights in nights to study or the study facilities that children can have to work on the schoolwork. For that reason awareness, is important to emphasis clearly the 'different' roles of parents and teachers in supporting children with special needs. For example teachers need to provide workable plans for illiterate parents to use to have input into their child's education.

Another is the socio-economic disadvantage of parents in both rural and urban areas that would support children with special needs to be educated. Most parents do have enough money to provide academic assistance for their children.

## **2.8 Specialists are required to support teachers**

The literature is clear, that for inclusion to succeed there needs to be the provision of specialist support. Teachers also benefit from the particular support that teacher aides provide (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Bauer & Shea, 1999; Porter, 1995).

More than three quarters of the questionnaire respondents agreed that the National Department of Education should engage more specialists in the field of special education to assist them to implement the Inclusive Education Programme. Many teachers felt that they were inadequately skilled themselves to implement the Inclusive Policy and needed the support of a specialists. Specialists would provide assistance for children with special needs in a wide range of areas. The support from specialists contributes significantly to teachers' ability to provide for students with special educational needs in the regular classrooms. A study by Wright and Graham (1995), on relationship between teachers and specialists in providing educational support to children with physical disabilities, showed evidence of improvement across may areas including academic learning for children with special needs.

In this study teachers identified some specific areas of special needs where they felt they needed specialist input and these included physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mild intellectual disabilities, visual impairment and hearing impairments.

If the government provide more specialists in these areas there is not doubt teachers, and certainly children, would benefit.

Currently, the Department of Education is putting more emphasis on teacher training but not on different areas of speciality. The Department of Health has its own training programme to assist people with disabilities but this is from a medical perspective. However, these two departments are yet to work collaboratively in developing programmes to assist children with special needs in regular schools. There needs to be a coordinated plan to show how specialists in the areas of disabilities from the Department of Health and the Department of Education could work along side regular classroom teachers to support children with special needs.

### **Theme 3: Government support to implement Inclusive Education Programme**

This section covers the role of government support in implementing inclusive education programmes. The areas covered in the questions are funding, teaching and learning resources, special equipment, and support for professional development training.

**Table 3: Government supports to implement Inclusive Education programme.**

Quest No	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Some times	%	No response	%
22	68	88%	5	7%	2	3%	2	3%
23	61	79%	7	9%	6	8%	3	4%
26	67	87%	5	6%	3	4%	2	3%
27	25	32%	32	42%	18	23%	2	3%
28	64	83%	10	13%	2	3%	1	1%
30	67	87%	7	9%	0	%	3	4%

#### **Q22. Professional training is essential before teachers teach children with special needs in regular classrooms**

Eighty-eight percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that was a need for proper teacher training before teachers could teach children with special needs effectively. This was also supported in comments offered by the sixty-eight teachers in the open-ended section of the questionnaire and by all the interviewees. One principal interviewed responded:



I think another most important thing is to train all our teachers on the importance of the policy and we can use this programme to teach and assist children with disabilities in our own classrooms. Next is to train others who are going to work closely with us teachers so all of us will know our roles when teaching these children. (T1, S5)

Another senior female teacher supported the statement but suggested, “The Department of Education should select potential officers to be trained in the area of special education in order to implement this programme” (T2, S3). One junior male teacher supported inclusion being taught in the teachers’ colleges but felt it was currently not adequate as the lecturers were not specialist in the field of special education. He also drew attention to the fact that special education courses were often an elective and not a core subject. He responded, “At the college the course was offered as an elective but not a core subject so I have very little idea. The lecturers are not trained, but teach us from the textbooks” (T1, S3). When asked if he needed more training in the field of special education, he said he did. One principal strongly recommended that all certificated teachers should go for further studies so that the Inclusive Policy could be implemented more effectively. When asked if he had taken a special education course while at the college she said, “We only learnt the first aid procedures and childcare but nothing to do with special education or to deal with disabled children” (T1, S5). A senior male teacher supported the inclusion and he emphasised the importance of training:

In my opinion, I really support the programme being implemented in regular schools. The only thing I could say is that the teachers also must be equipped with knowledge to teach these children with disabilities from now. I am not trained properly but I need to learn sign language to teach deaf children or blind children. (T2, S2)

Another senior male teacher, and deputy principal, who supported inclusive education, felt that School Inspectors’ training should also include special education. He commented, “School inspectors should be well trained also so that they can inspect us and see if we are implementing the policy or not” (T1, S6).

Seven percent did not support the statement but did not provide any reasons for this in the questionnaire open-ended section.

**Q 23. With the training, teachers should be capable of catering for learners with special needs.**

Out of the 77 questionnaire respondents 79% strongly supported the need for training. The need for training was further reinforced by the 68 teachers who responded to the open-ended section of the question. They said teachers should be trained in the field of special education in order to teach children with disabilities more effectively.

Furthermore, all the teachers who were interviewed stated that training gave them the capability to teach learners with special needs. One junior female teacher further elaborated:

I was taught sign languages and the use of Braille back at the college. So if parents bring their children with these types of disabilities I would accept them, providing that the provincial government or the school board of management provide the child with the special learning equipment which will make easy for me to teach and the child to learn. (T2, S1)

A junior male teacher also supported this comment and said, “I think I can teach those children with disabilities that I can manage to handle, like mild disabilities, learning difficulties, or partial visual impairment” (T1, S3). A junior female teacher, who had taken special education course at the college, indicated that although she only knew the basics, she was willing to teach children with special needs. She noted:

Yes, I have the heart for these children with special needs. With the very little knowledge I have I am currently utilising it on children with mild disabilities. But for children with hearing impairment, I have to be fully trained to use sign language in the class. However, while teaching in the class I identify which kid is bright and which kid is very slow in learning. So I use my knowledge to do screening test and give a test to find out the child’s learning level. Then I provide remedial support for them. (T2, S5)

Nine percent of the respondents did not support the statement but none gave a reason to this. Eight percent were uncertain and placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category.

**Q26. Staff Development Training in Schools is important for teachers so they know what the Inclusion Policy is all about.**

Eighty-seven percent of the questionnaire respondents supported the idea that staff professional development in schools was very important for their understanding of what inclusive education meant. Eight teachers who provided extra information in the open-ended section mentioned that school staff professional development was very important for every teacher to understand the concept of inclusive education. This was also supported by all the interviewees. One of the interviewees, a senior male teacher stated that, "Teachers who graduated recently are in a better position to provide school in-service programmes on this inclusive education programme so that certificate holders like myself will know the changes taking place" (T2, S2).

Adding further support for the importance of professional training in inclusive education, a junior male teacher felt that the school board of management members needed to know the importance of the policy as well:

In my view or opinion, I think the board of management, principal and senior staff of this school do not know what special education is, even though they enrol children with some forms of disability. May be the Department of Education personnel have not properly emphasised this special education issue to principals and the board of management during the principals and board of management workshop. (T1, S3)

Six percent of the questionnaire respondents did not support this statement however they did not provide any reasons.

**Q27. The Department of Education has to provide effective Training for Teachers in the area of Special Education.**

The statement, which emphasised the Department of Education's responsibility to provide effective training for teachers, elicited a spread of opinion across the Likert scale.

Thirty-two percent of the respondents indicated that the Department of Education should support the staff training in inclusive education. However, all the (12) interviewees supported the statement. One junior female teacher was very specific on the training programme that the Department of Education should provide: "The Department of Education should provide more special training for teachers to teach blind children or deaf children" (T2, S5). A junior male teacher remarked:

Teachers with certificates in teaching should be trained in areas of inclusive education because they don't know what inclusive education is. If we bring this idea to them they will not be cooperative with us. So it's important for them to get training (T1, S4).

Another junior female teacher stated that the college she attended made special education courses, both core and elective, compulsory for students to pass and stated, "Yes, this is the only college that takes the special education course very seriously and it's compulsory for all semesters. We have to pass all our basic sign languages and Braille reading and writing tests" (T2, S1).

Forty-two percent of the questionnaire respondents felt that the Department of Education did not provide sufficient training for teachers in the field of special education. Twenty three percent placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category but without explanation and indicated this in the open-ended section of the questionnaire.

**Q28. The Government should provide sufficient Funds for Physical Adaptation to implement the Policy.**

The statement suggesting the government needed to provide sufficient funds so the schools could make the necessary physical adaptations to the environment so as to facilitate inclusion received overwhelming support.

Over four fifths (83%) of the questionnaire respondents supported this statement. Forty-five teachers who provided additional comments in the open-ended questions stated that there should be proper facilities in schools for children with disabilities to use, and that the government should provided these modifications. All of the teachers interviewed supported the statement. One female participant stated, “The government support is very important in term of providing staff training, materials and funding for schools to have proper classrooms, toilets, pathways for disabled children to use” (T1, S2). Another senior female teacher and deputy principal said: “The government has to support schools to build classrooms where disabled children should move in and out freely. There should be special desks for disabled children and the classroom should be free from obstructions” (T2 S4). However, one principal stated that government funding could be distributed in other agencies rather than schools:

The Government both the national level and provincial level must provide funds in the area of special education to church agencies. Like build a disabled centre [special resource centre] for them and give them a vehicle. Put some teachers in the centres and teach these children. (T1, S5)

A junior male teacher stated, “The Government must provide enough financial support so we can build a separate classroom in the school for these children with disabilities in the schools” (T1, S3).

Thirteen percent of the respondents were against the idea but their reasons were not provided.

### **Q29. Relevant Resources are Essential to make Inclusive Programmes work.**

Teachers were asked to consider the value of resource material in making the inclusive programme successful. The results showed strong support.

Out of the 77 respondents to the questionnaire 87% agreed that relevant resources were essential for effective implementation of the Inclusive Policy. From this group, 51 teachers who respond to the open-ended section of the questionnaire considered that there should be enough teaching resources or materials in the classrooms for

teachers to use in order to teach children with special needs. All the interviewees agreed with the statement and identified some resources that would be useful to make the inclusive programme work. One senior female teacher felt that the government should provide resources to teach children with special needs such as buying hearing aides, wheelchairs, and glasses for children who cannot see well” (T2, S3). A senior male teacher also emphasised the importance of providing special equipment for teachers to use and assist children with special needs:

We need teaching resources and special equipment for visually impaired children. The government has to provide the equipment and also find specialist from other countries to come into the country and provide training for teachers in specialist areas at the same assist the schools with finance. (T2, S2)

Another junior female teacher responded, “I can teach some disabilities but needed support materials and equipment for other disabilities” (T2, S1). When asked which disabilities need more equipment and learning resources, she replied, “I think special equipment for the blind and some reading and writing materials for a blind child to use ... a proper desk for a disabled child will do.”

Nine percent of the respondents disagreed that additional resources were essential aspect of successful programme implementation although it is unclear why they took this position.

## Discussion

### ***Theme 3 – Government Support***

Theme three emphasised the Government’s support in implementing the Inclusive Education Policy. The National Government has developed plans and provided some funding to implement the Inclusive Education Policy in the areas of professional training and financial support.

#### **3.1 Professional Training**

Professional training in the field of special education is absolutely essential for implementing inclusive education programmes According to Smith et al., (2004), teachers need proper training to equip themselves before teaching children with special needs in the regular classrooms. Pre-service teachers at the teachers’ colleges

should acquire adequate content knowledge and skills before entering the teaching field to educate all children, regardless of their disabilities. According to Conway (2005), field teachers should have additional training in the field of special education for the same reasons. Staff development or workshops in schools within the areas of special education are a vital part of effective inclusive implementation.

This study showed that 80% of the respondents from the quantitative data agreed that teachers should be well trained in the field of special education. These results clearly indicated that many teachers in the field did not obtain training in special education and lacked experience in teaching children with special needs and for that reason they were reluctant to teach children with special needs. A similar study in the Waikato region of New Zealand showed that most teachers did not have formal training in special education and needed to have some or additional professional development to support inclusion (Connelly, 2004).

From this study three important points were highlighted in relation to professional training. First teachers were emphatic that it was difficult to implement the Inclusive Education Policy because many teachers in the field were certificate holders and did not have any idea about inclusive education (though they were teaching children with special needs in the classrooms during their careers). There were also teachers with diplomas in teaching in the field. Some were recent graduates, while others had not taught for more than ten years who were reluctant to implement the policy because they were wary of introducing the concept to the more experienced field teachers. For instance, a female teacher and diploma holder admitted that although she was trained and knew about the Inclusive Education, nevertheless she was just too scared to introduce it. This was because there were often attitude issues encountered in teachers who had been in the field for more than 15 years. Some of these more experienced teachers thought that teachers who had recently graduated should be listening to them, rather than introducing new concepts into the school. Hence, the new teachers with diplomas were too nervous to implement any new ideas from the college into the schools.

Second, teachers who were trained generally in the field of special education felt that their content knowledge and skills were insufficient to assist children with diverse

disabilities. Many expressed concern that they needed to acquire more content knowledge in specific areas of disability so that they could give more professional assistance in this area. The Division of Guidance and Counselling have taken the initiative to provide provincial counselling workshops so that teachers can gain counselling knowledge and provide assistance to children with academic and social needs. However, most of the modules are not taken due to lack of financial support from the Department of Education in conducting provincial workshops.

There were certain disabilities that teachers were interested in getting further training on. These included training on how to teach children with visual impairment. Teachers wanted to learn more about how to use Braille for writing and reading before they felt that they could teach children with visual impairments. Teachers would like to receive training in sign languages so that they can educate children who have hearing impairments. Training was also needed to teach children who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Teachers also wanted to learn how to modify curriculum to suit the learning abilities of the children with special needs and organise an inclusive classroom. The development of an IEP, a new concept for many teachers was also an area when training in required.

Third, many teachers commented that there should be more specialist training in different areas of disabilities so that specialities could provide assistance in delivering programmes to children with special needs. These teachers believed that the Department of Education needed to train more specialists, such as psychotherapists, occupational therapists, and clinical psychologists so that they can visit schools and support teachers. According to Mitchell, (1999) and Smith et al., (2005) the training of specialists is an important part of the collaboration required to implement inclusive programmes in regular schools.

One point stressed by many of the teachers, was that primary schools inspectors should also obtain training in the field of special education. Teachers felt that part of the blame for not knowing the importance of this programme fell on school inspectors. They are field officers who should be conversant with programmes such as the Inclusive Education Policy. They are the ones teachers felt should organise and offer staff professional training in schools within their zones. They are the people who



provide field reports to the decision-makers about what is happening with the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy as well as other educational programmes. The next plan of action depends on their reports, yet does not appear to have happened in the Enga Province.

### **3.2 Financial Support**

Financial support is a very important aspect of effective implementation of inclusive education programmes in regular schools. In most cases, financial assistance is given by the National Government to assist schools to successfully implement the Inclusive Education Policy (Frost, 2002). According to Stainback and Stainback (1990), the government should provide financial assistance for schools to purchase teaching and learning resources and the special learning equipment for students with special needs. There should be funds provided to build classrooms and create an environment, which is as barrier-free as possible for children with special needs (Goff, 1990).

More than four fifths (83%) of the respondents strongly agreed that National Government should provide financial assistance to build proper facilities for children with special needs and provided, teaching and learning resources and special equipment for these children. Teachers who have experienced teaching children with disabilities strongly emphasised the importance of Government financial support to build proper facilities like toilets ensure easy access for children with special needs to all school and classroom areas. This was especially important for children with physical disabilities who may be using wheelchairs or crutches, and children who are visually impaired. According to Mitchell (1999), schools should have proper educational facilities so that children with special needs can move around the school environment freely without obstructions. He maintains that the environment should provide children with special needs with barrier free access into offices, classrooms, library, toilets, playing fields, pathways and other facilities at the schools.

In terms of having relevant resources available in schools, again 87% of the respondents agreed that the government has to provide support materials and equipment necessary for each disability represented at a school. Many teachers admitted that inadequate supplies of resources and equipment discouraged them when having to teach children with special needs. A female teacher stated that she was

trained to teach children with visual impairment. However, she needed both the school and government support to buy equipment such as a Braille machine for these children.

There should also be adequate resources for teaching. Teachers need supportive teaching aids to provide effective teaching to all children in the classrooms. There should be sufficient sports materials for all children to play with in order to build strong social relationships.

#### **Theme 4. General Issues related to Inclusion**

There are several general issues, which are particular to each country, influence how inclusive education programmes are introduced and develop in on education system. The three main issues the cultural issues, the geographical location of schools and the transport system and, whether or not a model from developed countries is the ideal approach for a developing country.

**Table 4 General issues related to Inclusion**

Quest No	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Some times	%	No response	%
25	23	30%	32	42%	20	26%	2	2%
31	25	33%	40	52%	10	12%	2	3%
32	27	35%	34	44%	14	18%	2	3%
33	52	68%	15	19%	8	10%	2	3%

#### **Q25. Cultural values prevent children with special needs from being enrolled in schools**

This statement, which emphasised the impact of cultural values on the learning of children with special needs elicited relatively even spread of responses on the Likert scale. Thirty percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that culture does have an impact on the enrolment of children with special needs. More than half of the (7) interviewees agreed that there were implications of culture on children, and families with special needs. A senior female teacher remarked:

Yes, it really has a big impact. People believe that having a child who is disabled means there is a spell on the family either from the past or current and is passed on.

So such parents don't want to send their kids out in public. They also believe their kids cannot be educated and have some form of employment, so they withhold them back at home. (T2, S3)

A female teacher and deputy principal stated that:

I see that culture totally rejects children with special needs in Enga because the parents and society don't care for them. A classic example is children with AIDS who have no place to live and be educated because the culture doesn't accept them. Soon we will have children with AIDS in schools and will the culture allow them to enrol? The children with disabilities are the same. Only a few people support disabled children. Generally; 90% of the people see that disabled people have nothing to contribute to society. (T2, S4)

Some teachers said that tribal warfare was a cultural factor that all children's education including children with special needs. These teachers felt this was a negative feature Papua New Guinea culture that had to change: A junior male teacher said:

Tribal fighting is the biggest concern we have in this area. During fighting the first properties that get burnt down are schools and local clinic ... People are not thinking about the change of lives and leave a peaceful life ... Educating their children, who can bring changes to the community, seems not a priority for them. There should be a change in the attitudes of our people ... (T1, S2)

However, 42% of the questionnaire respondents thought that culture had no impact on the enrolment of children with special needs. They were of the opinion that negative cultural practices were less of a problem now. Out of four interviewees who were against the cultural impact, one junior male teacher stated, "Yes, before we were scared of the culture and respected it, however now the world is changing so we must also change and give equal rights to disabled people to participate in everything thing that we normal people can do" (T1, S3). This was also supported by the comments of another junior female teacher. She said, "In the past people have negative attitudes to disabled children but now people realise that education is important for their kids so they enrol the disabled children in schools" (T2, S1). Another senior female teacher

thought culture was not a barrier for children with special needs to be enrolled and be educated. In her views, she responded:

There is no problem with the culture. I think parents are scared of bringing their children to school. And the other part is that parents see that there is no worth in educating these children with disabilities. I think parents are making the decisions for their children and not the children themselves. (T2, S3)

One quarter of the questionnaire respondents indicated that culture was 'sometimes' a factor in preventing children with special needs from being enrolled in schools. Only one senior female teacher stated, "It only depends on the type of disabilities. Children who are partially blind and physical disabilities are enrolled in schools but it's only for children with multiple disabilities" (T2, S3).

### **Q31. Geographical location is not a barrier to implement the Inclusive Education Policy**

Thirty-three percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that geographical location of schools was not a barrier to implementing inclusive programme. This statement was also supported by most (8) of the interviewees. One senior male interviewee commented, "I don't think so because many of us have been teaching children with different disability problems and these children come to school all the time" (T2, S2). A female teacher who is also a deputy principal has enrolled many children with disabilities and thought geographical location was not a barrier. She replied, "Not really, as I have told you earlier, we enrol children who have physical disabilities, some who cannot read and write properly, and one who is almost blind. These children live far from schools but they come" (T2, S4). A senior male teacher and deputy principal, who supported the above statement, commented, "Well as I have told you earlier, I have been teaching many disabled children so that means geography is not a problem. I think we should teach children with disabilities who come to school." (T1, S6).

However, more than half (52%) of the questionnaire respondents felt that geographical location had affected the education of most children disabilities. The 23

teachers who provided additional information in the open-ended section of the questionnaire stated that geographical location was a critical factor and could impede the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy. This opinion was supported by 4 teachers interviewed. One junior male respondent commented:

Many children sleep far away from the school and walk to school every day. Therefore, I think if children with special needs come to school it will affect their learning. However, those in nearby villages should not have any problems to send their children with special needs to school. (T1, S3)

Another junior male teacher stated, “The geographical condition is one big factor. It’s hard for disabled children living far from school to come each day to school and we cannot afford to have cars for each school to transport children.” (T1, S1). Comments from another teacher showed that she too felt that geographical features hindered the progress of implementation the inclusion:

I think geography of this province is not good and it’s one factor that prevents to many children, both disabled and non-disabled children from walking to school and return home every day. Some live long distances, crossing big rivers, climbing hills to come to schools, so it has some impact on their education (T2, S5)

However, a senior female teacher stated that not all children with disabilities are affected by the geographical features of the province, only those with particular disabilities:

Children in wheelchairs and crutches will find it hard to come to school. I think the blind children as well, because they need support from others to come to schools. But other children, like slow learners, are physically normal, so they will not have a problem coming to school. (T2, S3).

Ten percent of the questionnaire respondents thought it was ‘sometimes’ an issue.

**Q32. Urban and easy road access schools can implement the inclusive programme more easily than rural schools.**

Thirty-five percent of the questionnaire respondents thought that those schools that have easy road access or are located in the urban centres would implement the inclusive programme in a more effective and complete manner. The schools located in the rural parts of the provinces would possibly experience more problems. One quarter of the teachers who were interviewed supported the statement. One principal commented on the issue as follows:

I think children with disabilities who live in urban areas won't be affected because their relatives can provide assistance like transportation or accommodate them near the school but children with disabilities in the rural areas, it's difficult for them to go to school. (T1, S5)

A junior female teacher who agreed with the statement said, "If schools have easy road access children can walk to schools or catch a bus ride to schools. The school buildings are access free with enough learning materials" (T1, S4). A junior female teacher also agreed but stressed that teachers also contribute to the lack of implementation of the policy:

Yes, I think it contributes a lot. Many normal children do not go to school so that means disabled children find it difficult to attend classes. Another thing is teachers don't like to take up posting in rural schools because of the geographical location. They go and stay for one term then run away from school so the privileges of learning are being deprived. (T2, S6)

However, 44% of the questionnaire respondents did not agree road access was a limitation. They felt that Inclusive Education Policy had to be implemented regardless of the location of the schools or the geographical position. Three quarters (9) of the interviewees were of the same opinion contending that road access should not be a barrier. One junior male teacher responded:

Disabled children in the rural schools should be educated in the manner as disable children in city or town schools. They have the equal rights to be enrolled and we teachers should encourage them and their parents. Some children may be physically disabled but they may have the mental capabilities to learn in schools. (T1, S2)

Another senior female teacher and deputy principal was support of the same opinion:

I have been teaching in rural schools for many years and have seen disabled kids in schools. Some with partial visual or hearing impairment and physical disability and they come to schools. So whether urban or rural schools we teachers should allow these children to be educated. (T2, S4)

Eighteen percent of the questionnaire respondents placed themselves in the 'sometimes' category. One junior male teacher interviewed felt that both rural and urban schools should implement inclusive education policy but suggested that it depends on the type of disabilities children have and their locations from the nearest schools and gave an example:

I teach in a rural school and have a disabled boy in my grade three class who has cerebral palsy. He lives about one hour away from the school but comes to school every day often late. I accept him in and teach him with other children. (T1, S3)

**Q33. The concept of inclusive education is best for developed countries and is not appropriate for Papua New Guinea.**

A high percentage (68%) of the questionnaire respondents agreed that inclusive education was best for developed countries and not for countries like Papua New Guinea. Two teachers interviewed argued that it would not succeed in Papua New Guinea. One of the male interviewees expressed a concern in this manner:

Why does the government usually go and copy policy after policy from European countries and bring them to this country? Too many policies do not make sense and bear any fruits... Just trying to steal foreign aid or what! The reform policy is not working, now this policy. (T2, S2)

Interestingly only 19% who provided answers on the questionnaire felt it was appropriate for the Papua New Guinea context. Nine teachers interviewed felt that the inclusive education policy was appropriate and would work. One junior female teacher made this remark:

Yes definitely, this policy can be implemented in our country. You know not all disabled children can come to school but those who come we have to teach them. It's so important for children with disabilities to have a second chance to enjoy life like the normal children. (T1, S4).

Another senior female teacher also supported her statement and commented:

It's an international policy and good for our country and I support its implementation but we have to raise awareness. It will take some time for teachers to understand the inclusive policy is but once we know we can implement the policy. (T2, S6)

A male teacher and a diploma holder remarked:

Well it's an international policy and PNG has to follow like other countries. The idea most teachers don't get is, we are trying to help these children become self-reliant when completing their education and be able to live an independent life. These children could one day become small businessmen/women in this community or can hold top positions in the country. (T1, S3)

This position was also supported by another female teacher and deputy principal and she responded:

Since Papua New Guinea is a democratic country, every child in the class has the right to be educated so I think inclusive education is much better and will cater for the interests of both normal children and disabled children in the classroom. Our Philosophy of Education also mentioned we must develop Integral Human Development so everyone has to participate equally to develop this nation. These include both normal and disabled people. (T1, S1)

A further 10% were not sure whether the concept of inclusiveness best fits the country or not so replied in the 'sometimes' category. One junior female interviewee stated that though the Inclusive Education Policy was best for the country, she is not sure whether the teachers are implementing it:



Yes, it's for all the countries in the world. But inside PNG I think we are not implementing it. Some provinces implementing it, I don't know. But the Department of Education has to promote this policy out there. (T1, S4)

## **Discussion**

### **Theme 4: General issues about Inclusion**

This section examines teachers' responses to three broad areas that are more specific to the introduction of inclusion to countries like Papua New Guinea. These would not necessarily constitute such significant issues in some other countries but are very relevant to this context.

#### **4.1 Cultural Implications of Inclusion**

According to Bevan-Brown (2003), cultural influences have a big impact on the education of all children. For example, culture determines which disabilities receive more attention in an education system. It is also important for teachers to understand the cultural backgrounds of the children they teach. (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Fraser, 2005).

In this study, the issues of culture and enrolment of children with special needs into regular schools received a range of responses on the questionnaire. Thirty percent of the respondents agreed that culture had an impact on children with disabilities being excluded from education. Half of the teachers interviewed also felt that culture had an impact on the non-inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools. First, children with moderate or severe disabilities were prevented by their parents from to expose themselves in a public gathering, away from their home. Parents would not like exposing their children, believing that it was a curse and might come to the attention of other tribes. A similar study in Kenya revealed that cultural perspectives were preventing children with intellectual disabilities attending mainstream schools (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2001).

Second, most people in Papua New Guinea still believe that people with disabilities have nothing to contribute to the community. Because of this perception, parents feel

it is waste of time sending their children with disabilities to school. They keep them at home and involve them in basic household jobs.

Additionally, the issue of having children with AIDS or who are HIV positive in schools, was a challenge for both the teachers and the parents. This comment made by a deputy principal, stated that both teachers and parents will surely reject children with HIV or AIDS from their homes or schools in the near future, as AIDS is spreading so quickly in the province and throughout the country. This means that there will be more children with HIV or AIDS in the community in the near future. Parents, relatives and especially teachers will definitely reject these children from schools unless they are able to view the situation with greater awareness which can really only occur through a programme of education. This is discriminating, which is against the Inclusion Education Policy, the Philosophy of Education and the National Constitution of the country relating to the issue of equal access to participation for every person.

Teachers have to take a positive approach to include children with HIV and AIDS with other children in the regular classrooms and provide appropriate educational programmes for them. A Recent report by Elapa (2006) from the National Newspaper stated that the National Department of Education had conducted an AIDS workshop at Madang Teachers College. This was to help lecturers in all training colleges and universities in the country to learn and discuss the challenges of teaching about HIV and AIDS in primary and secondary schools. A similar study by Naud'e and Pretorius (2003) in South Africa realised that teachers would be facing and educating children with HIV and AIDS, decided to provide a constructive and appropriate instructional framework which teachers could incorporate into their classroom programme.

The fighting amongst tribes was once again identified as a factor denying many children the right to a formal education. The cultural perceptions of gaining more wealth, land and authority have indeed cost many children their right to a formal education. Many schools close and teachers and school children fear being attacked during these fights. Therefore, attitudes of people need to be change completely. Education of children should be given the first priority. Government services, such as

schools and health clinics in rural and urban areas are often destroyed during tribal warfare and protection of these facilities must be a priority.

Furthermore, cultural implications were also a barrier inside the classrooms. Teachers should also be mindful of providing certain types of assistance to children with special needs as sometimes it may offend the child's culture. According to Beven-Brown (2003) teachers have to value the cultural aspect of the children before incorporating them into the learning environment. Thus allocating bright children as peer support for children with special needs should also avoid any cultural barrier so children could freely work together.

Forty percent of the questionnaire respondents and half of the interviewees felt that culture did not impact on educating children with special needs, and they offered some valid reasons for holding this view. For example, teachers who were teaching children with special needs, in both rural and urban schools, had not personally seen any cultural interference regarding the enrolment of children with special needs. Some of the teachers commented that in the past, culture had an impact on the welfare of children with disabilities however, parents now realise the importance of education for these children.

The situation obviously still exists where cultural factors work against children with special needs. However, there needs to be a change in attitudes of teachers, parents and the community that children with special needs can participate equally in all levels of activities just like other children without special needs. There are people with disabilities who have achieved highly and are role models. Some teachers in the field are have some forms of disabilities but intellectually they can perform like other teachers with out disabilities. Therefore, every opportunity should been given to children with special needs to participate equally in all educational opportunities and should not be withdrawn because of the cultural barriers.

## **4.2 Geographical location a barrier for inclusion**

Enga Province is situated along the Owen Stanley Range where there are high mountains, valleys and fast flowing rivers. The villages are not situated close to each

other. Many children have to travel some kilometres every morning to attend the nearest school.

However, in this study, 33% of the questionnaire respondents were of the opinion that geographical location of schools was not a barrier. Those teachers who stated that geographical location was not a barrier to some of these teachers were experienced in teaching children with special needs. For instance, a female teacher and a deputy principal stated that she had been enrolling children with physical disabilities, partial visual impairment, learning difficulties, and partial hearing impairment in her schools and some of these children lived some kilometres away. She reported that these children attended school every school day and learned alongside with their peers.

In contrast, 52% of the questionnaire respondents felt that geographical location had limited the opportunity for many children with special needs to attend school. Many of these teachers commented that they had seen many children with disabilities back in the village. Parents, they said, could not afford to send these children to school because of the distance and the terrain they would have to negotiate.

From this study it is apparent that there are three main issues relating to geographic location and accessibility to schooling for children with special needs. First, the distance from the school and the nature of the terrain between home and school will be influential in whether a child with a disability can make the journey independently. Second, if a child is not able to travel on his or her own, then whether he or she can get to school will depend on the availability of transport and or the availability of another person to assist. Third, accessibility is going to be dependent on the nature of an individual's disability. Generally, difficult terrain and or significant distance from home to school will impact most on those with physical and visual disabilities. If geographical factors present a limitation educationally to children with special needs, one would expect urban children with special needs to have an advantage over their rural counterparts.

However, only 35% of the respondents from the questionnaire thought that schools in cities, towns and urban centres would implement the Inclusive Education Policy more effectively than in rural areas. Teachers did feel that schools in urban areas would

receive greater support from specialists. The specialists and other trained professionals would be able to reach schools more easily to either assist children or provide staff development training. Further support from other sources such as the private sector, should help teachers assist children with special needs in schools.

On the other hand 44% of the questionnaire respondents felt that geographical location should not make a difference. They may think it does pose a barrier but every effort needs to be made to ensure children with special needs are educated alongside their peers without special needs.

#### **4.3 Inclusive Education best for Developed Countries and Not Appropriate for Papua New Guinea**

Inclusive education is being pursued by many nations and was endorsed by the United Nations during the World Conference on Special Education Needs (Ainscow, 1999; Inclusion International, 1998). Many countries, both developed and developing, have implemented an inclusive policy. For instance in Benin, the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research has initiated a programme and said, “Greater attention and specific emphasis should be placed on education for persons with disabilities” (pp. 16-19). The project was aimed to promote inclusion for children with disabilities in the regular school system. Teachers, specialists and community rehabilitation officers were trained to facilitate the project in regular schools (UNESCO, 1997). In New Zealand, the Government has fully committed to provide adequate special educational programmes for children with special needs with the aim of achieving the world-class inclusive education system (Mentis et al., 2005; Ministry of Education, 1999).

In this study, about two thirds of the questionnaire respondents thought that inclusive education was best for developed countries but not for Papua New Guinea. There seem to be number of reasons for teachers feeling this way. First, the education system in developed countries is compulsory for all children regardless, of their disabilities. Schools accept both children with disabilities and without disabilities where teachers, specialists and support staff are available to provide quality education. It is very unclear why this is a reason for teachers to say inclusion is not for Papua New Guinea. Something

Second, these teachers seemed to be of the opinion that developed countries provide adequate funding to support the inclusive education programme. More funds would probably be provided to meet the cost of school facilities, teaching and learning resources, support staff and specialists, to assist classroom teachers to provide programmes for children with special needs. For instance, in New Zealand, the Ministry of Education provides funds to assist children with different levels of disabilities. These included the Special Education Grants (SEG), Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS), Supplementary Learning Support (SLS) Severe Behavioural Initiative, Speech-language Initiative and the School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF) (O'Brien & Ryba, 2005). Such sophisticated and targeted funding arrangements do not exist in most developing countries like Papua New Guinea.

Third in developed countries there are perceived to be sufficient training programmes to train teachers in the field of special education. Most universities and tertiary institutions provide special education courses and this gives experienced teachers as well as new graduates, the opportunity to be better informed and skilled. Furthermore, the communication and transport systems in these countries are often of a higher standard and this contributes to successful inclusion. Fourth, and most importantly, much effort has gone into changing attitudes towards and perceptions of people with disabilities in developed countries. In most developing countries this work is yet to occur and with limited resources it is likely to take Papua New Guinea many years to achieve a marked turnaround in this area.

Nevertheless, that does not stop Papua New Guinea from implementing the Inclusive Education Policy. The majority of the interviewees believed inclusive education policy was best for this country and gave reasons for this support. First, the Inclusive Education Policy, being an international policy, supported the country's Special Education Policy and its Philosophy of Education. These policies acknowledge the national constitution and the principle of providing equal educational opportunities to children with special needs (Frost, 2002).

Second, many teachers in this study have experienced teaching children with disabilities alongside children without special needs without really understanding the

concept of inclusive education. The researcher assumes that most of these children with special needs were children with more mild disabilities. Many of these children have advanced in their education and found employment. A few were recognised for their leadership qualities and appointed village leaders. The teachers who taught these children have experienced first hand the “successes” of inclusion and for this reason support its implementation into Papua New Guinea.

Third, although the government provides funds directly to schools for purchasing school teaching and learning resources, it benefits all children. Teachers in this study stated they have been teaching children with special needs with children without special needs and this clearly indicates that all these children have benefited from the learning resources provided by the schools through the Government’s subsidy. Although the researcher believes there is no specific fund for children with special needs allocated to schools apart from special education centres, it is believed that in the near future funding would be provided to cater for the interests of children with special needs in regular schools.

Furthermore, the National Department of Education had considered the importance of implementing the Inclusion Policy and thus made all special education courses compulsory offered in all teachers’ colleges and the University of Goroka. Teachers are trained to provide educational programmes for children with special needs. The major focus for the Department of Education is to provide greater awareness of inclusive education. In the study many of the teachers have taken courses in special education yet they felt that the National Department of Education should provide awareness for all teachers to be fully aware of the importance in educating children with special needs. However, if all teachers develop positive attitudes in educating children with special needs the Inclusive Education Policy will be effectively implemented.

## **5. Summary**

This chapter discusses the findings related to the four themes. In this study the results indicated that the teachers supported the notion of Inclusive Education. They felt that children with special needs would benefit both academically and socially from being

educated alongside children without special needs in regular classrooms. However, in reality they believed that the Inclusive Education Policy would not be effectively implemented unless there is change in the attitudes of teachers and necessary support persons or organizations such as parents and caregivers, community rehabilitation officers, and the National Government. Collaboration with parents and caregivers to provide assistances to children with special needs is very important. However, it is important to provide awareness at this stage so that parents may know their roles in assisting their children with special needs. Collaboration with community rehabilitation officers also makes inclusion work effectively in both schools and communities.

Government support is considered very important for an effective implementation of inclusion. Although policies were written to support the Inclusive Education Policy and training programmes were in place, teachers pointed out that there was a lack of training for field teachers who had not received training in the area of special education. Some teachers stated that courses offered in teachers' colleges were inadequate and did not have properly trained lecturers. They also emphasised the need for training specialists to collaboratively support teachers to make inclusion work. Teachers also indicated that Inclusive Education Policy could not succeed unless the Government provided teaching and learning resources for children with special needs in the classrooms and facilities that were barrier free for children with special needs.

Teachers further mentioned that issues of culture and enrolment of children with special needs into regular schools had an impact on children with disabilities. These included the cultural beliefs against enrolling children with severe disabilities, children who are HIV positive or have AIDS into regular schools. On the other hand, teachers emphasised that tribal fighting has hindered the progress of many children's education and should be stopped. Geographical location was a barrier for children with moderate and severe disabilities but not for children with mild disabilities or impairments.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH, IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION.

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines some of the limitations of this study, discusses some implications of the findings and provides recommendations for future research in this area.

#### **1. Limitations of the Research**

There were a number of limitations identified in this research:

1. Most of the research participants did not understand the concept of inclusion and did not know about the Inclusive Education Policy, even though many were teaching children with disabilities in the classrooms. The researcher would also have liked to have obtained information from teachers who had been involved in implementing and understand the Inclusive Education Policy. These teachers could have provided more specific information relevant to implementing the policy.
2. The study was conducted in only one province of the country and therefore findings may vary across other provinces. The study was conducted in Enga Province. Data collected is based on what the research participants from this province have seen and experienced in teaching children with special needs in regular schools. Results from teachers in other provinces may differ from those in the Enga Province.
3. The dates scheduled for data collection were not appropriate. The researcher scheduled the date for the data collection on the second last week of the third term break without consulting the Division of Education Advisor. There were other important programmes scheduled around the same time that the

researcher wanted to do his research. This made it difficult for the researcher to deliver the research questionnaire and conduct the interviews. This also had an impact on the actual findings as the researcher sensed that teachers hurried to complete the questionnaires because they were distracted by the events taking place.

## **2. Implications of Findings**

### **Introduction**

This study has looked into different areas that either promoted or hindered the progress of inclusive education in regular schools. In Papua New Guinea, many issues emerged from the study and there have implications for various department, agencies, etc.

#### ***2.1 Awareness of the Policy by schools***

The awareness of the Inclusive Education Policy by both the community and schools is very important. Many teachers with certificates in teaching do not know the principles and the importance of inclusive education and this was clearly indicated from the data collected. Parents of children with special needs also are not aware of the principle and the importance of inclusive education. Many parents in the rural areas are illiterate, while other have a primary or high school level of education. The Department of Education needs to conduct an awareness campaign about the Inclusive Education Policy, especially in rural areas. Workshops should be conducted for both teachers and parents who have children with disabilities so that they can understand their roles and responsibilities in providing effective education for their children.

The study also discovered that most schools have not delegated a teacher to be responsible for the welfare of children with special needs. It seems that having a teacher responsible for assisting children with special needs was not a priority, mainly because school administrations do not fully understand the importance of the inclusion. Thus, it is important that schools delegate a teacher to oversee the education of children with special needs.

## 2.2 Tribal Warfare

Tribal warfare in Enga Province is an ongoing issue. There are ongoing tribal fights in most of the districts, and where sometimes these last for a short term, most times the fighting lasts for years. The destruction of Government, services such as schools, is not uncommon. Schools close down and teachers and children do not attend schools because of the fighting. The rights for all children to get a formal education are being denied. Therefore, there needs to be a complete change in the attitude of the people in the villages to stop fighting and focus on educating their children.

## 2.3 *Teaching postings in Rural Schools*

Teachers posted to remote schools in Enga Province often encountered problems. Many of the schools in rural areas do not have road access. The only means of reaching schools is by walking several kilometres from the nearest feeder road or the main highway. Because of schools' geographical locations, teachers often either do not take up teaching postings or they take up postings but do not spend the entire school year at a school. This has resulted in many children not being educated properly. Most do not complete the primary level of education. The Department of Education is aware of this problem, however it has to provide some incentives to motivate teachers to take up postings in rural areas. A rural allowance or an increase in salaries for teachers in rural schools would be a positive step.

## 2.4 **School Inspectors' knowledge of the Inclusive Education Policy**

School Inspectors are field officers who visit schools, inspect teachers and write reports on what they observed. Any educational programmes that are introduced by the Department of Education are to be implemented by teachers in schools, and should be monitored by the inspectors. For effective implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy, inspectors should be trained in the field of special education. It is understood that school inspectors have not had this training. This makes it very difficult for them to provide awareness and encourage teachers with diplomas in teaching, to provide staff development programmes on the latest developments in the education system. Therefore workshops or in-service training programmes in special education should be conducted for primary school inspectors so that they are fully aware of this initiative.

There are no inspection criteria for inspectors to assess teachers teaching children with special needs. Most inspection reports by primary school inspectors focus generally on how teachers teach in classrooms and the learning of children. Additional inspection information should be added to the inspection criteria with guidelines on how teachers can teach children with special needs.

At the end of each month a report known as the 'Monthly Returns' has to be submitted by each school to the Provincial Education Office. This is to inform the policy and decision-makers of what is happening at each school. This form contains reports on the number of children in each grade at the schools, the school professional development programme, teachers' absenteeism and other related occurrences at the school. The Inspectors should encourage principals to provide up-to-date statistics on the number of children with special needs in the school, so that the provincial headquarters could develop staff training programmes for teachers on how to teach these children.

## **2.5 Class size**

The class sizes in many primary schools are unpredictable. Many schools in urban centres have more than 40 students per teacher in a class. Although schools in rural areas may have fewer children per class, the Department of Education has encouraged multigrade teaching. This could be one of the factors preventing teachers from providing assistance to children with needs. In this study, many teachers supported the Inclusive Education Policy philosophically, but practically, were less enthusiastic. The difference between these two was strongly related to student/teacher ratios.

## **2.6 Government Support**

The National Government had committed to provide education for all children. Funding was provided for each school to purchase basic materials for teachers and children to use in schools. The curriculum materials were developed by the Department of Education and distributed to individual schools in the province. However, there should be money budgeted for children with special needs which should be given to each school to meet the specific needs of these children. For instance, if the school has a student with visual impairment, the Board of Management should be able to buy a Braille machine for the school, which the

student can use. Many classrooms in each school are built using modern materials, yet are not freely accessible to children with special needs. Therefore, the Board of Management has to reconsider how to make all buildings in schools freely accessible for children with special needs.

## **2.7 Training of Lecturers, Specialists and Teacher Aides**

According to the 1993 Special Education Policy of Papua New Guinea, the Department of Education has created a lecturer's position especially for special education in all primary school teachers' colleges. The two-year certificate in teaching has been upgraded to a three year diploma programme. Special education courses are required as core subjects to be taught for both first and second years students. However, to find trained lecturers to teach these courses has been a major problem for most of the colleges and the department. While the Department of Education has created the position, it failed to train potential teachers or lecturers in the field of special education. It is believed that almost three quarters of the eight teachers colleges do not have well-trained lecturers in the field of special education. The Department of Education has to take a serious look at resolving this. Potential teachers should be chosen to take up special education training overseas with a view to these teachers taking up lecturing position in special education.

Training of specialists in different areas of disabilities is very essential to promote collaborative and effective implementation of the inclusive Education Policy in the country. The Department of Education has to select potential officers to be trained as School counsellor, speech and language therapist, the occupational therapist, physiotherapist and or behaviour specialists. There is also a need for the National Department of Education to consider planning a teacher aide training programme so that teachers and teacher aides can collaboratively provide educational support for children with special needs in regular classrooms. This would alleviate some of the concerns teachers have, such as increased workloads, and additional planning and preparation for children with special needs.

## **2.8 Special Education Courses**

Special education is compulsory for all second year teachers' college students. There is no special education course designed for first year students. Trained lecturers

sometimes take the initiative to develop elective courses in special education. However, that depends on the availability of the time given for each subject's strands. The Head of the Professional Development Strand has to accommodate elective courses in special education into the subject time distribution so that courses can be offered each semester for both first and second years.

The study also revealed that training in specific areas of disability is required. For instance, few teachers were trained on how to use Braille or sign language. The Department of Education developed a one-year certificate course on special education in 1997. However, it appears that courses in sign language and the use of Braille were not offered, due to lack of a trained specialist lecturer. It is important that the Department of Education take initiatives to develop training programmes in different areas of special need so that potential teachers can be trained. Potential lecturers in special education should be selected to study overseas in different areas of speciality so that when they return they can teach potential teachers.

The Division of Guidance and Counselling has taken the initiative to conduct provincial workshops in counselling for teachers in primary schools, high schools and secondary schools, to deal with students with academic and behavioural difficulties. The National Department of Education, with the assistance from the Provincial Division of Education should collaboratively fund such workshops as part of an ongoing programme. The Papua New Guinea Education Institute is the only teachers college that offers counselling courses to in-service teachers. The course is well designed and practical and this could also be developed and introduced in other teachers' colleges.

## **2.9 Courses on HIV and AIDS**

Teachers need to be trained in how to accommodate and provide for children who are HIV positive or have AIDS in the classroom. HIV and AIDS normally affects the central nervous system, which alters brain functions and this can have an impact on a child's learning. Therefore, teachers should be trained in how to provide well-structured and effective learning for children with HIV and AIDS. Recently, a report by Elapa (2006) from the National Newspaper stated that the National Department of Education has conducted an AIDS workshop at Madang Teachers' College. This was

to help lecturers in all training colleges and universities in the country to learn and discuss the challenges of teaching about HIV and AIDS in primary schools. This is a positive development, and all the institutions now need to collectively develop a course on HIV and AIDS and teach pre-service teachers on this topic. Provincial workshops should also be made available for field teachers gain useful knowledge on how to provide educational assistance to children with HIV and AIDS and to raise community awareness.

### **2.10 Cultural Barrier**

Papua New Guinea has more than 700 different cultures and languages. This makes it difficult for teachers to easily adapt to each culture. Parents' perceptions of enrolling children with disabilities into schools are different. Some parents still hold the attitudes that if their children have some form of disability, they are labelled as inferior. Such parents see that, putting them in schools as a waste of time and resources. These attitudes need to be changed. Children with disabilities need to be enrolled and participate equally with the children without special needs. Parents need to develop a new and positive approach to special needs and need help to see the value of education for their children.

HIV and AIDS is definitely a controversial issue. In this study found that children with HIV or AIDS may have their right to an education denied because of the cultural attitudes people hold. Many of these children would be abandoned by their immediate family members while teachers may fear having such children in their classroom. Their peers may totally reject them. Therefore, the Department of Health and Education have to join forces to educate parents and teachers and assist them to develop positive attitudes and allow these children to have equal participation in all educational opportunities.

### **3. Suggestion further research**

This research is the first of its kind in the country and is aimed at discovering the factors which may promote or hinder the progress of inclusive education. Since the Department of Education has incorporated the Inclusive Education Policy and developed a special education policy, it has encouraged teachers to implement the

policy. This study has only focused on one province yet has highlighted some possible areas for further research.

1. It is recommended that there should be further research that is similar but targeting teachers in other provinces and teachers who have experience implementing the Inclusive Education Policy.
2. Teachers' colleges are implementing the Government's Special Education Policy by providing special education courses as part of the academic programme. This study has revealed that many teachers both certificate and diploma holders, feel that they have gained either very little, or no content knowledge and skills on different areas in special education. This has prompted the researcher to recommend further research on examining the effectiveness of pre-service programmes in special education.
3. The National Department of Education has developed the Special Education Policy and has created a special education unit to co-ordinate special education programmes in the country. However, further research is needed to assess the outcome of the implementation of the policy across the entire country.
4. The areas of disability are broad and yet there are no accurate statistics on the number of children with special needs in each school in the provinces, what those special needs are, or how teachers are providing assistance to these children either academically and socially. More work is required here to give an understanding of disability specific issues.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study was conducted with the aim of determining how primary school teachers viewed and experienced teaching children with special needs alongside children without special needs in regular classrooms. The study was conducted in five districts of the Enga Province of Papua New Guinea. Seventy-seven participants responded to the research questionnaire while 12 among the 77 were also involved in interviews.



This study has focused on factors, which either promote or impede the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy in schools.

The implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy gained majority support from the teachers in this study. Teachers believed that inclusion was appropriate for this country and that all children need to be educated together. Although there were cultural differences and geographical implications, teachers thought that children with disabilities should be given an equal opportunity to have a formal education like their peers without special needs and inclusion was the best option.

From the findings several important issues emerge which need to be addressed. First, many teachers in this study were not aware of the concept of inclusion, yet it was quite interesting to find that they were teaching children with special needs. Thus, it was important for the Department of Education to develop and provide awareness not only to teachers but also the parents and children in the schools of the importance of Inclusive Education Policy. While, teachers were teaching children with special needs in the regular classrooms, it was quite obvious that not all children with special needs were enrolled and educated with other children without special needs. One may ask why all children with disabilities were not enrolled and educated. This study identifies several reasons for this. These include; the limited knowledge field teachers have for accommodating children with moderate and severe disabilities, no specialists to assist teachers, inadequate teaching and learning resources to support children with special needs, cultural and geographical situations that excluded some children with severe disabilities from being educated in regular classrooms.

Second, attitudes of teachers towards inclusion were a big concern. In this study teachers indicated that attitude had a huge impact on educating children with special needs in regular classrooms and needed to be change. Teachers also pointed out that attitudes of peers and parents were also important for the progress of an inclusive education programme. Hence, positive attitudes were needed to teach and support children with special needs in regular schools.

Third, teachers in this study have raised concerns that in order for the Inclusive Education Policy to be implemented effectively in regular schools some important

points need to be addressed. Teachers need more training in the field of special education. Ongoing training in all areas of disabilities would provide the teachers with adequate knowledge and skills to cater for children with special needs. There needs to be training for specialists in different areas of disability support because currently there are no specialists available to provide such assistance. There also needs to be training for teacher aides who could provide daily assistance to teachers in catering for children with special needs. Training was also needed for teachers to prepare themselves to accommodate and teach children with HIV or AIDS in the regular classroom. Financial assistance was considered very essential to effectively implementing the Inclusive Education Policy. Funding was needed to purchase not only the teaching and learning resources but also for school facilities to make inclusion work effectively.

It was important that the National Government and the National Department of Education develop strategies of how best the highlighted issues can be addressed so that Inclusive Education Policy is effectively implemented in primary schools not only in Enga Province but throughout the whole country.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Department of Human  
Development & Counselling  
University of Waikato  
Private Mail Bag, 3105  
Hamilton, 2001

**New Zealand**

17<sup>th</sup> August 2005

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT  
IN YOUR PROVINCE**

My name is Allan Jim and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Waikato currently completing a Masters in Special Education. Part of the requirement for this qualification is the completion of a research thesis.

I am very interested in conducting my research study in Enga Province. First, I have taught in the province for many years and am familiar with educational approaches and have a relationship with many of those involved in the profession in the region. Second, I believe that this research has the potential to make a positive contribution to special education programmes and practices in the Province.

My research is entitled *Teachers' views on providing for children with special needs in inclusive classrooms: A Papua New Guinea Study*. The specific objectives are to:

1. To investigate primary school teachers' views on the Inclusive Education Policy.
2. To learn of some of the challenges teachers face when implementing the Inclusive Education Policy in mainstream classrooms.
  - a. To identify what support is being provided by the Government to assist in the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy
  - b. To explore if any cultural factors are impacting on the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy and how these are exerting an influence.

The research is dedicated to finding ways of improving the effectiveness of practice related to the policy. It is not concerned with critiquing the policy per se. I trust that the findings from this research will assist the Department of Education in implementing the special education policy.

Therefore, I am seeking your permission to invite primary teachers to participate within the four districts of Wabag, Wapenamada, Porgera and Kompiam. Once I have obtained your consent, and the consent of other relevant authorities, I will approach the principals of a group of schools in each of the districts of the province and with their permission invite their staff to participate.

Each participant will be asked to provide written consent before any data collection commences. They will also be informed that their participation is voluntary, that they may withdraw from the study at any time, and that they can decline to answer specific questions. All data collected will be treated with confidentiality, and the anonymity of those participating will be protected at all times.

If you approve of this research study I would be grateful if you could complete, sign and return to me by post the attached consent form.

This research project will be supervised by Dr Roger Moltzen, chairperson of the Department of Human Development and Counselling, School of Education, University of Waikato. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr Moltzen if you have any questions and or if you require further information. His contact details are below.

Dr Roger Moltzen Department of Human Development & Counselling School of Education University of Waikato Private Mail Bag 3105 Hamilton, 2001 New Zealand Ph: (647) 8384695 Email address: <a href="mailto:rim@waikato.ac.nz">rim@waikato.ac.nz</a>
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Yours faithfully,

Allan Jim Mapsea  
Postgraduate Student  
Ph: (64 7) 8582141  
Email address: [aj39@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:aj39@waikato.ac.nz)

## Appendix 2

Department of Human  
Development & Counselling  
University of Waikato  
Private Mail Bag, 3105  
Hamilton, 2001

**New Zealand**  
17<sup>th</sup> August 2005

The Headmaster  
\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School  
P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_  
Wabag, Enga Province

### **Papua New Guinea**

Dear Sir,

### **RE: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR PROVINCE**

My name is Allan Jim Mapsea and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Waikato who is currently completing a Masters in Special Education. Part of the requirement for this qualification is the completion of a research thesis.

I am very interested in conducting my research study in Enga Province and have selected your school for possible involvement.

My research is entitled *Teachers' views on providing for children with special needs in inclusive classrooms: A Papua New Guinea Study*. The specific objectives are to:

1. To investigate primary school teachers' views on the Inclusive Education Policy.
2. To learn of some of the challenges teachers face when implementing the Inclusive Education Policy in mainstream classrooms.
3. To identify what support is being provided by the Government to assist in the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy
4. To explore if any cultural factors are impacting on the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy and how these are exerting an influence.

The research is dedicated to finding ways of improving the effectiveness of practice related to the policy. It is not concerned with critiquing the policy per se. I trust that the findings from this research will assist the Department of Education in implementing the special education policy.

I have obtained permission from the Chairman, Provincial Education Board and the Principal, Research Officer to formally conduct my research in the selected primary schools in this Province. Therefore, I am seeking your permission to allow your teachers to participate in the research. Each participant will be asked to provide written consent before any data collection commences. They will also be informed that their participation is voluntary, that they may withdraw from the study at any time, and that they can decline to answer specific questions. All data collected will be treated with confidentiality and the anonymity of those participating will be protected at all times. The time scheduled to visit your school and conduct the research is indicated below.

If you approve of this research study I would be grateful if you could complete, sign and return to me the attached consent form.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions and or if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

Allan Jim Mapsea  
Postgraduate Student  
Ph: (64 7) 8582141  
Email address: [aj39@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:aj39@waikato.ac.nz)



Appendix 3

**CONSENT FORM OF THE INTERVIEWEE**

Allan Jim has explained the topic and purpose of the research interview to me. I understand that;

1. I may choose not to answer any questions I consider inappropriate.
2. My comments will be treated confidentiality within the research process.
3. My participation will be kept anonymously.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_

The Interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School

P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix 4*

**Teacher Questionnaire**

General Instructions

This questionnaire invites you to share your views and experiences concerning the implementation of the *Special Education Programme* on the *Inclusive Education Policy*.

**PART A. Personal Details**

1. Gender: Male  Female
  
2. Year you completed teachers' training college: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Teachers' training college qualification/s attained:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did your training include any course/s (either compulsory or elective) related to special education?  
Yes  No   
(If yes, please describe the nature of the programme/s or course/s)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Have you completed any in-service courses, university courses, workshops or other training in special education since graduating from teachers' training college?  
Yes  No   
(If yes, please describe the nature of the programme/s or course/s)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Did you had any other experience/s prior to commencing teaching that prepared you to work with children with special needs in your classroom?  
Yes  No   
(If yes, please describe the nature of this experience/s)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Part B: Implementing Inclusive Education Programmes in Regular Classrooms

You are requested to respond to the items below using the following scale

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Strongly disagree</i> | 4. <i>Agree</i>          |
| 2. <i>Disagree</i>          | 5. <i>Strongly agree</i> |
| 3. <i>Sometimes</i>         |                          |

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Every child, regardless of his/her ability, has the right to a formal education at a regular <b>school</b> .					
2	Every child, regardless of his/her ability, has the right to a formal education in a regular <b>classroom</b> .					
3	All children with special needs can be fully integrated into regular classrooms?					
4	Some types of special needs are impossible to cater for in regular classrooms.					
5	Most children with physical disabilities can be taught in the regular classroom.					
6	<b>Most children with intellectual disabilities can be taught in the regular classroom.</b>					
7	The policy of inclusion is fine in theory but does not work in practice.					
8	The most appropriate learning setting for children with special needs is the Special Education Resource Centre					
9	Every school should have a policy on children with special needs.					
10	I have very little knowledge about inclusive education.					
11	Inclusion calls for changes in the mind or attitudes of teachers' more than just changes in policy, systems and practice.					
12	Children with special needs demand extra time from the regular class teacher.					
13	Children with special needs benefit academically from inclusion.					
14	Children with special needs build stronger social relationships from inclusion.					
15	Regular Children benefit academically from inclusion.					
16	Regular Children benefit socially from inclusion					
17	Children with special needs learn more in regular classrooms than in Special Resource Centres.					
18	Because of the additional workload required, regular class teachers cannot meet the academic needs of the children with special needs.					
19	Teachers have to use a separate curriculum to cater for children with special needs.					
20	Children with special needs disrupt other students' learning.					
21	The development of peer support helps the children with special needs both academically and socially.					
22	Professional training is essential before regular classroom teachers can cater					

	for children with special needs in their classrooms.					
23	With this training all teachers should be capable of catering for learners with special needs.					
24	The relationship between the teacher and the parents is critical to children with special needs achieving academically and socially in regular classrooms.					
25	In terms of a cultural perspective, children with special needs should not be enrolled in regular schools.					
26	School staff development training has to emphasize the importance of the inclusive policy for teachers so they can understand and implement it.					
27	Staff development training provided by the Department of Education for primary school teachers has been effective in the area of special education.					
28	The National Government and the Local Level Government Councils have to provide sufficient funds for adaptations to the physical environment of schools (e.g., ramps and disability toilets) for the inclusive education programme to be successful.					
29	The government should train more specialists (e.g., psychologists, therapists) to assist teachers in the implementation of the inclusive education programme.					
30	Access to relevant resources is essential to make inclusive programmes work effectively.					
31	Geographical location is not a barrier to implementing the inclusive programme.					
32	Schools in urban areas or those that have access to roads are better able to implement the inclusive education programme than schools in rural/remote areas.					
33	The concept of inclusive education best fits developed countries and is not appropriate for our country, PNG.					

### Open-Ended Questions

1. Please provide any additional comments you have on the Inclusive Education Policy

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2. What experiences have you had in implementing the Inclusive Education Policy?

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3. What do you think are the most important factors for inclusion to succeed?

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4. What do you think are the most significant existing barriers to inclusion succeeding?

- 
- 
- 
5. Please add any other comments you wish to make on this topic

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## Appendix 5

### Teacher Interview Schedule

1. The Inclusive Education Policy states that all children, regardless of any difficulties or difference, have a fundamental right, wherever possible, to receive their education in a regular school. Do you support or oppose this position? Can you elaborate on your view?
2. Do you think all or a majority or only a small percentage of children with special needs can be catered for in regular classrooms? If the regular classroom is not appropriate for all children with special needs, which group or groups do you consider should be educated in special resource schools (or a special class)?
3. Do you consider that inclusive education is possible in your school? Please explain.
4. Does your school have a special/inclusive education policy? If yes, can you describe this policy, how it was developed and how it is being implemented?
5. If inclusive education is to be effectively implemented in a school, what is essential to making it work? What can hinder its successful implementation?
6. What specific attributes does a teacher need to possess to work with children with special needs?
7. Have you had any training in special/inclusive education, and if so, can you describe this training?
8. Do you personally feel you have had sufficient preparation to teach children with special needs in your own classroom?
9. Is there a staff member in your school with responsibility for children with special needs? Can you describe their role?
10. What are some cultural issues that need to be considered in implementing the Inclusive Education policy in PNG?

\* This is a 'draft' version of the interview schedule that reflects the 'themes' to be explored. It is anticipated that some modifications may be made when the questionnaire responses are analysed.